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**Contested Conservation: Past and Present Conservation Praxis in the
Great Lakes Region of Africa.**

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in Human Geography

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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Abstract

Describing the history of Semuliki National Park from the late 19th century till the present day, this study elucidates the origins of conservation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Using post-colonial and border studies as a theoretical framework, and using a combination of archival and qualitative data, the study questions how and why conservation praxis and policy has changed since the colonial era. The research presented here reveals that the conservation status of Semuliki Forest, as a forest estate on the Uganda – Congo border (and originally administered by the Uganda Forest Department) arose primarily because of geographical and logistical impediments that hindered commercial exploitation, and secondly in recognition of the unique ecological phenomena that occur within the protected area. However, over time, the physical boundaries of the forest were successfully contested by local inhabitants to accommodate population growth and increased agricultural production. The study reveals the flexible nature of the borders of Semuliki National Park (both national and international) and describes how these borders were constructed and subsequently challenged. It also reveals the enduring legacy of colonial border-making in that current conservation stratagems in the region (exemplified by Transboundary Natural Resource Management) aim to find ways of addressing conservation imperatives at locations such as Semuliki where important ecological areas are naturally contiguous but divided by international borders.

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University of Cape Town

List of Acronyms

ADRA – Adventists Development and Relief Agency
CBNRM – Community Based Natural Resource Management
CCF – Chief Conservator of Forests
CFO – Chief Forest Officer
CM – Co Management
CRM – Collaborative Resource Management
CWM – Community Wildlife Management
DC – District Commissioner
DFO – District Forest Officer
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
ICDP – Integrated Conservation and Development Project
IUCN – World Conservation Union
KCA – Kibale Conservation Area
KNP – Kibale National Park
KSCDP – Kibale-Semuliki Conservation and Development Project
NFA – National Forest Authority
NGO – Non Governmental Organisation
NRM – National Resistance Movement
PC – Provincial Commissioner
PFO – Provincial Forest Officer
RFO – Regional Forest Officer
SFR – Semuliki Forest Reserve
SNP – Semuliki National Park
TBNRM – Transboundary Natural Resource Management
UFD – Uganda Forest Department
UPDF – Ugandan Peoples Defence Force
UWA – Uganda Wildlife Authority
UWC – Uganda Wildlife Commission

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Chapter One – Conservation in the Borderlands.

Introduction

Semuliki National Park (SNP) on the South West border of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a relatively new national park, with a long and convoluted history of environmental management and contestation. The aim of this thesis is to historicize SNP (as a protected area) while considering the relevance of border studies to the historical narratives that I aim to elucidate. This chapter provides a brief background to the case study, discusses the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide the research, discusses the methodology employed and concludes with a summary of research findings.

Semuliki National Park – A Brief Orientation

Semuliki National Park, in the Bundibugyo district of south-western Uganda, is a medium altitude, moist, evergreen to semi deciduous forest covering an area of 219 km² (Chege et al., 2002). The flora is dominated by a single tree, *Cynometra alexandri*, interspersed with evergreens (Ibid). The fauna of the forest is highly diverse and includes more than 400 bird species, 8 species of diurnal forest primates and other mammals, including African Elephants, Hippos, and Buffalo. SNP is bounded by seven parishes, with a population density of approximately 300 persons/km² (Ibid). Despite documented removals (during the 1990s) of Amba and Batwa (Pygmy) communities, small populations remain along the borders of SNP and their history forms an important part of the narratives of SNP.

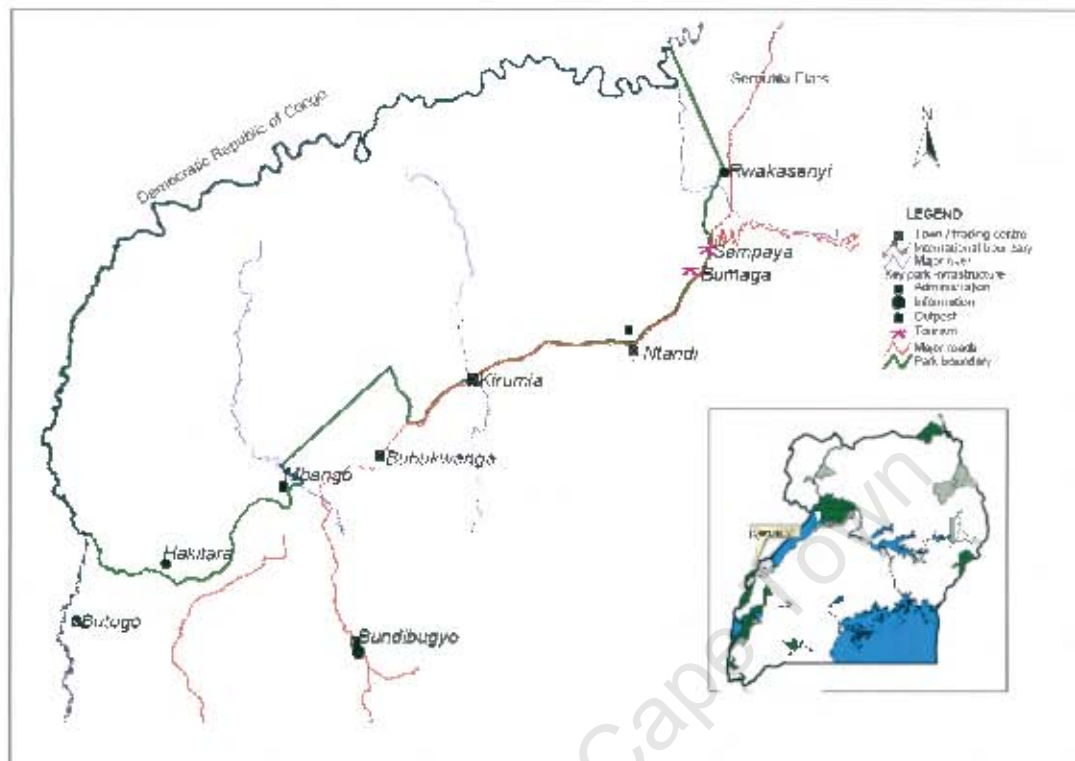


Figure 1: Location of Semuliki National Park. Source: UWA, 2005b.

The park has been under some variety of formal administrative protection since 1932, when it was gazetted as a Forest Reserve by the colonial government, as a means of managing *Trypanosomiasis* (sleeping sickness or nagana) in the region.¹ Following independence in 1962, the Ugandan Forestry Department “instigated a curious form of management for Semuliki Forest known as Taungya, in which local communities are invited to clear and cultivate the forest until such as time as indigenous timber trees planted by the Forest Department grow and ‘edge out’ cultivation” (Uganda Wildlife Authority, 2005a p.1).

¹ For further readings on *Trypanosomiasis* see Giblin (1990), Waller (1990), White (1995).

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Reflecting general conservation trends of the 1980s,² the then Ministry of Environment Protection identified Semuliki forest reserve together with Kibale and Mt. Elgon forest reserves as priority sites for forest conservation. As a result, the ministry established the Forest Conservation & Sustainable Development project in 1988, in order to serve the long term conservation of natural resources in the three areas.

As a means of further formalising the conservation status of the forest, the Government of Uganda gazetted Semuliki, together with Kibale forest reserve, as National Parks in 1993. An Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) was drafted for Semuliki and Kibale and endured three phases that saw involvement from the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Ugandan Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, and the Ugandan Wildlife Authority (UWA). With political upheaval between 1997 and 2000, the ICDP suffered significant setbacks (Chege et al., 2002) and SNP became an area of violence and conflict (Ibid). Currently SNP is marketed as one of several parks under the authority of the UWA and is considered a birding 'hotspot'. There are no public-access roads within the park and all tourist activities are guided and on foot (UWA, 2005a). From a regional perspective, SNP is a relatively small link in a chain of protected areas that traverse the state boundaries of Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC. This network includes the famous Queen Elizabeth and Bwindi parks in Uganda, the *Parc National des Volcans* in Rwanda and the *Parc National des Virunga* (formerly King Albert National Park) in the DRC. Reflecting current trends in conservation, many parks within the network are implementing Transboundary Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) strategies. Unlike many transboundary efforts in Southern Africa which are

² Discussed in detail later in this thesis

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characterised by top-level governmental agreements and treaties, the TBNRM attempts in the Great Lakes region are comparatively ad-hoc and motivated by conservation NGOs and parastatals. Their efforts include joint patrols, GIS based species monitoring programmes and methods for overcoming language barriers between staff from varying authorities, across different borders (Plumptre et al., 2003). It is this TBNRM component that exemplifies current conservation trends in Africa and beyond.

Aims and Objectives

The primary aims of this study are to account how and why conservation has changed and to understand how and why these changes are related to (social and political) conflicts in SNP specifically, and in the Great Lakes Region in general. Because of SNP's long history and its changing management regimes, this historical narrative is a valuable yardstick against which to evaluate the evolution of conservation praxis in the region. Furthermore, by historicizing conservation praxis in SNP this thesis elucidates the evidence and importance of past conservation strategies for current attempts and stratagems.

While much of the conflict associated with SNP relates to the very nature of conservation theory, it is important to contextualise these conflicts within a broader perspective of conflict in the region in general. As this requires a measure of political and social analysis beyond the realm of conservation theory, this thesis also draws on border studies to better understand the dynamics of the region. However, border studies go beyond just the geo- or socio- politics of the region and are a useful analytical framework

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for achieving the primary aims mentioned above. By exploring the dynamics of national boundaries, conservation (internal state) boundaries and the boundaries imposed by race and ethnicity, this thesis contributes to our understanding of the changes in conservation, the influence of colonialism and the significance thereof in contemporary conservation initiatives.

A Theoretical Overview

This section serves to situate the study within the theoretical frameworks that inform my research. While the aim is to draw links between the disciplines of conservation theory and border studies, they are represented below as separate bodies of work and the links are discussed where pertinent.

Colonialism and Conservation

As indicated above, SNP came into being as a result of colonial ideas about wildlife and conservation. Thus an examination of conservation practice must be understood in the context of general colonial ideas about nature and 'Natives'. This theoretical overview explores these 'colonial ideas', while chapters two and three show where and how these 'colonial ideas' are manifest at SNP and in turn synthesises some of the theoretical thinking that informs our knowledge of conservation history and its current practice.

Adams (2003 p. 8) highlights the fact that colonial conservation is rooted in both a romantic and rational tradition. The romantic tradition was born out of a celebration of 'wilderness' (typified by the poetry of Wordsworth) and "has decried the impact of

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modernization” (Ibid. p. 8). This is in contrast to the scientific tradition which ultimately seeks to improve and control nature for material gain. Drayton (2000) describes the British experience in great detail and shows how science evolved as a mechanism for improving the empire. The colonial ‘sciences’ of both disease control and forestry indicate the extent to which science served as the handmaiden of empire, for both necessitated the control and extraction of vast quantities of natural resources.

‘Wilderness’, however, came to epitomise the romantic tradition that venerates nature. That the SNP is administered by a ‘wildlife authority’ hints at this link and Cronon (1996, p.69) details the reformulation of the idea of wilderness and the incongruity of wilderness being “quite profoundly a human creation... a product of civilization”. In many cases the creation of ‘wilderness’ necessitated a cleansing of the landscape, both ideologically (by denying African agency and indigenous knowledge of fauna and flora) and physically (by forcibly removing people). These themes are explored at length by Neumann (1998), Hulme and Murphree (2001), Anderson and Grove (1987), Giles-Vernick (2002) and others.

As Hingston (1931, p. 406) informs in his piece entitled *Proposed British National Parks for Africa*:

The human life and the wild life must be separated permanently and completely. So long as man and animals live together there will always be complaints and serious trouble... This problem admits of no permanent solution until the human life and the wild life are separated into two completely distinct compartments. This means that, if the animal life is to be preserved, it must be segregated in a sanctuary. But the sanctuary must be a real and an inviolate institution, one which, in so far as human effort can make it, is a sanctuary for all time.

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Some seventy years later, international efforts to conserve biodiversity continue on a scale unimaginable in 1931. However the article by Hingston is important in that it serves as a means by which to measure the development of conservation in the region. Hingston cites many issues such as crop raiding, poaching and agricultural encroachment as problems that arise from protected areas and indeed these same issues occur in contemporary conservation programs and schemes. It is however the responses to and mechanisms for dealing with these issues that have changed.

Pullan (1988) offers valuable insight into the shifts in conservation policy over time. Charting the progression from forest and game reserves (circa 1900) to national parks (from 1925) the author considers the problems and constraints associated with maintaining and establishing new protected areas. He (1988, p. 177), comments that the establishment of national parks was encouraged as a means of ensuring biodiversity protection in perpetuity, but observes the managerial and territorial changes that occurred following independence in many African colonies:

Conservationists have always perceived game and forest reserves as lacking permanency. Hence the attraction of the national park, with an independent board of trustees, to ensure that it was inviolate. However, at independence, many countries found it difficult to administer their parks in this way and they were placed under the direction of a government minister. This enabled changes to be made, as for example when the Volcanoes National Park (Rwanda) had 10,000 ha excised from it in 1968 to create pyrethrum farms and another 4000 ha to extend the area available to pastoralists.

Pullan also highlights the trend of establishing biosphere reserves that occurred in central Africa from 1976. He (Ibid, p. 181) details no less than 16 biosphere reserves established in 12 central African countries between 1976 and 1983 and comments that:

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They [biosphere reserves] have the clear objective of establishing a relationship between totally protected areas and the surrounding areas where the economic activities of man are permitted. These are controlled on the basis of a scientific understanding of the ecosystems involved. Whether this approach will be successful remains to be seen, but it would seem to have a better chance of success than that of establishing national parks in areas where the alienation of the local people to the concept of the park is inevitable...

The 1980s heralded a change in conservation thinking in that conservation initiatives became coupled with issues of rural development. The publication of the *Our Common Future*³ (IUCN, 1987) in 1987 popularised the concept of 'sustainable development' and encouraged a wave of critical thinking and debate about 'the environment' across a broad range of disciplines (e.g. economics, biology, geography, environmental management etc.) While the "fortress conservation" approach paid little or no heed to communities (beyond prohibiting access to and utilisation of resources), the new paradigms sought to reverse this trend by including communities both "physically" and "politically" in the conservation policy process (Adams and Hulme, Date Unknown, p. 9).

Murphree (2004, p. 3) comments on the proliferation of programs and initiatives which embody the 'new paradigm' described above. They include:

Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), Community Wildlife Management (CWM), Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) and Co-Management (CM) [initiatives] ... all perceived as falling within a general family of related perspectives but each exhibiting differences of intent, emphasis and substance.

The commonality in the above acronyms is their people-centred approach and the focus of including groups marginalised by conservation initiatives. Indeed, Newmark and Hugh (2000) credit the global concerns for African habitat loss in the 1980's (in the wake of

³ Also known as the Brundtland Report.

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agricultural expansion, 'modernisation', and population growth) as the antecedent for community focused conservation (e.g. Pullan 1998). As early as 1980, the IUCN (cited in Newmark and Hugh 2000, p. 586) identified that "given the underlying determinants of habitat loss ... conservation activities in the field must be intimately linked with development."

Adams and Hulme (Date Unknown) link the rise in popularity of the 'sustainable development' discourse with that of community conservation, while Dzingirai (2003, p. 5) observes that the influx of foreign aid money to combat poaching also contributed to a "change of tactics."

Despite the changes described above, Hart and Hall (1996, p.323) describe a situation in which community based initiatives proved impossible in the context of a declining state, namely Zaire.

As national institutions grow weaker, local, often individual private interests increasingly determine use of forest resources, even within protected areas. Arguments have been advanced to empower local communities to manage resources for conservation.... [but] rural populations in eastern Zaire, as elsewhere on Central Africa's forest frontier, exist by exploiting the forest. These communities have responded to expanding market options by intensifying their exploitation of the forest, even to the detriment of resources upon which they depend.

A similar critique of community-centred conservation approaches was however echoed by others who felt that conservation initiatives were suffering, irreparably, at the behest of poverty alleviation, development, etc.⁴ Described as a "resurgent protectionist argument" (Wilshusen et al. 2002, p. 18) it called for a return to harsh authoritarian

⁴ See Kramer et al., 1997 and Terborgh, 1999.

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measures, indicative of colonial ideology and pointed to “perceived failure of people oriented approaches to conservation” (Brechtin et al. 2002, p. 42).

As indicated above, conservation in Africa has undergone many shifts, and is championed by different interest groups. SNP is no exception, and as such this theoretical overview situates SNP within a general framework for understanding the historical trajectories of conservation practice there. The current conservation strategies such as Transboundary Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) are also examined.

Considering Borders

While the colonial legacy in Africa is complex and enduring, perhaps the most ubiquitous legacy is that of the borders established by colonial powers during the ‘scramble’ for Africa. SNP is a protected area but it also forms part of the border between Uganda and the DRC. In the context of the extensive transboundary protected areas network that stretches across Rwanda, the DRC and Uganda, SNP thus offers interesting insight into the roles that borders serve in the establishment and contestation of protected areas. As Anderson and O’Dowd (1999 p. 593) inform, borders and border regions “have a great variety of material uses and symbolic meanings and display an apparently bewildering diversity of characteristics and relations.” Understanding this ‘bewildering diversity’ in its entirety is not the aim of this thesis, but rather to use aspects of ‘border studies’ that inform a richer understanding of SNP as both an historically contested conservation area and border region.

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Nugent and Asiwaju (1996) begin their discussion of borders by highlighting the paradoxes that lie within borders and “the lack of congruence between the kind of hard lines which are reflected visually on maps and the reality of frontiers which may not be visible to the naked eye” (Ibid, p.1). In the African context, Nugent and Asiwaju (Ibid.) characterise borders as serving changing objectives of the various colonial powers. These objectives included taxing trade, controlling the spread of disease, and controlling labour. The authors note however, that the colonial “desire to control regimes relied in a practical sense upon the boundaries that they had constructed during the Scramble and afterwards. Yet the desire to control frontier regions was always more pronounced than the physical capacity to do so” (Ibid, p.4). As Chapter Two will show, this was never more true than at SNP.

The colonial project of border making was concerned with both ‘internal’ and ‘external’ state boundaries and is often characterised as ‘arbitrary’. However, Anderson and O’Dowd (1999, p.2) comment that “these external and internal state borders are mapped on to, and interact with, a plethora of other social boundaries such as those distinguishing national, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups.” This process of ‘mapping on to’ and interaction allows then for differing conceptualisations of borders such as legal lines defining state territory, or as frontier zones facilitating legal and illegal trade and traffic. The above paragraph also points to some of the paradoxes inherent in borders and border regions. Anderson and O’Dowd (1999 p. 3) succinctly capture these dualities thus:

...borders look inwards and outwards: they simultaneously unify and divide, include and exclude. They are coercive, disabling and limiting, including and excluding many people against their will; but they are also benign and enabling,

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providing the basis for security, dominant forms of identity and conventional representative democracy. 'Prison' or 'refuge', they can facilitate oppression or provide an escape from it.

As Chapter Three will show, this is especially true in the context of protected areas in the borderlands of the Great Lakes region in general. At SNP specifically, the park and the border with the DRC serves to simultaneously 'include and exclude' specific groups (as defined by nationality/race/ethnicity)⁵ which invariably results in conflict and the marginalisation of certain groups. In the case of the SNP, the Batwa community, (who claim to be the indigenous occupants of much of the Great Lakes' forest and lacustrine habitats) are arguably the most marginalised, being described by one tour guide in the area as nothing more than a tourist freak-show, eking out a living as beggars and "blowing it all on grog." (Anonymous personal communication, 19/3/2005).

The struggle of the Batwa is however not localised to the SNP⁶ and is characterised by a historical process of marginalisation, which forms a tenacious sub-plot to the Hutu-Tutsi narrative of identity formation/contestation, and notions of autochthonous and extraneous races, cultures and ethnicities.⁷ Indeed, Comaroff and Comaroff (2001) and others use the notion of borders to explore formations and contestations of personal identity in a similar manner to the formation of national identity.

⁵ See Mamdani (2001) for a fuller appreciation of national/racial/ethnic identity in Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC.

⁶ See Lewis (2000) *Batwa Pygmies of the Great Lakes Region*

⁷ See Chretien (2003) *The Great Lakes of Africa Two Thousand Years of History*

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The boundaries and (state) borders that have been the background to much of the conflict in the Great Lakes, are testament to the contradictory nature of borders described above. But Anderson and O'Dowd, (1999, p.5) remind us that while borders are paradoxical they serve as the 'handmaidens' of territoriality.

[Territoriality] involves the active use of geographic space to classify social phenomena, to communicate social boundaries and to influence or control resources, things, information, symbols and people, by delimiting and asserting some form of control...

It is in the process of using space to assert control that conservation has been imbued with politics and that contestations arise.

Newman and Paasi (1998) offer a synopsis of border related work in the social sciences, and identify four main themes within border research. Of significance here are the middle two, namely: 'constructing sociospatial identities', and 'territorial narratives: boundaries of exclusion and inclusion'. These themes emphasise the symbolic nature of borders and the social and cultural meanings that come to constitute borders, and in turn are constituted by borders. The process of defining the 'other' is inimitably linked with defining boundaries, and colonial conservation practices helped to embed the notion of Africans as the 'other' by employing both physical and imaginary boundaries. However, as Newman and Paasi (Ibid, p.195) assert, "the construction of boundaries at all scales and dimensions takes place through narrativity... These narratives are mediated through a large number of social and political institutions which experience perpetual development and transformation." It is this very narrative of 'development' and 'transformation' at Semuliki National Park that is the focus of this thesis.

Methodology

This thesis is interdisciplinary in nature and hence the methodology reflects a combination of archival research and qualitative interviews. Broadly speaking, the author combines post-colonial theory with that of border studies, and focuses on the spaces and places of conservation praxis over time. As Newman and Paasi (1998) observe, many projects within geography are increasingly interdisciplinary in nature, and this project too crosses the boundaries between the disciplines of history and human geography.

Archives

Field work consisted of three months in Uganda, which was split between general research in Kampala, archival work in Fort Portal and numerous visits to the field site. Prior to fieldwork the greatest concern was the integrity of the archives in Uganda, and indeed this proved to be a difficult problem. As Chapters Two and three will demonstrate, there exists a detailed documentary record of the establishment and subsequent running of SNP and the Uganda Forest Department (UFD) in general, however the record is not complete in that in many instances there are no records for numerous consecutive years! While significant resources are kept by the Uganda National Forest Authority (NFA) in Kampala,⁸ the process of accessing Forest Department archives for the Western Province is fraught with difficulty. Housed in the attic of a dilapidated colonial era government building, the material is haphazardly dumped in unordered piles and is exposed to wind, rain, dust and a myriad of small mammals and insects. In many cases documents are buried under an array of old vehicle

⁸ The NFA kindly made available their file of correspondence relating to SNP which contains documents spanning 1944-2000.

parts and agricultural implements and have become completely illegible or disintegrate with the slightest touch.



Figure 2: Fort Portal District Archives. Source: Author, 2005.

In order to capture as much data as possible in the shortest space of time, the researcher used a digital camera⁹ and tripod to capture each document that proved pertinent to the study. In total over 500 pages were captured using this method, and as most documents were dated, they were subsequently placed in chronological order, thus explicating a patchy narrative.

⁹ Olympus MJU 600.

To augment the above mentioned research, the researcher spent a further month at the Rhodes House archives in Oxford, England accessing and analysing colonial era government reports and legislation ('Blue Books') that pertain to conservation issues in general and SNP specifically. These include issues such as disease control, hunting regulations and silviculture as well as information regarding forest utilization by indigenous populations.

Interviews

The fieldwork for this study took place between November 2005 and January 2006 where the researcher conducted unstructured or semi-structured interviews in Kampala, Fort Portal, Kibale, and SNP. Interviews typically lasted for 1 to 1 ½ hours but several took place while respondents were at work in SNP or on the road between SNP and Fort Portal – these interviews therefore typically lasted slightly longer. The interviews generally followed a similar format but were altered according to the profession/ role of the person interviewed. Respondents include UWA advisors, members, management and staff, ex-UWA employees, staff of the IUCN and others.¹⁰

The original project conception envisaged a much stronger anthropological/ethnographic component than is present in this thesis. As the field work progressed, the researcher realised the logistical and budgetary constraints involved in this line of research and (due to necessity) decided to focus on archival material and qualitative data from respondents

¹⁰ See appendix A for and sample question sheet and the Reference List for a complete list of interviewees.

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that were easily accessible.¹¹ As a result, the narrative that unfolds below should be considered only one version, and one drawn primarily 'top-down', that is, from the perspective of official archives, park employees and, NGO publications. This is not to say that the people who live in and around SNP do not feature or that their story is not important, but rather that their narrative may be very different from the account which appears here. It is the researcher's sincere hope that this study might inspire further research to record and tell these stories, allowing for an even richer understanding than is presented here.

Summary and Findings

This paper reveals that the conservation status of Semuliki Forest, as a forest estate within the UFD, arose *primarily* because of geographical and logistical impediments that hindered commercial exploitation, and only *secondly*, in recognition of the ecological phenomena that occur within the protected area. Geographical barriers notwithstanding, the physical boundaries of SFR were successfully rearranged and reduced by local inhabitants, to accommodate population growth and increased agricultural production.

The study shows the flexible nature of the borders of SNP (both national and international) and describes how these borders were constructed and subsequently

¹¹ Public transport to SNP is infrequent, always overloaded with goods and passengers, and usually on the back of open pick-up trucks. Accommodation in SNP (at the time of writing) was limited to a clearing for camping at Bumaga (new tourist huts were near completion) or at a privately run camp site near Sempaya. In either case, supplies of food (other than very basic staples such as plantains and maize meal) and treated water are limited and a lengthy stay necessitates private transport, even to access even the modest supplies at the trading centre near Ntandi. As a result the author did not have enough funding to spend lengthy amounts of time at SNP, let alone employ, transport and maintain a translator or field assistant, (each consecutive visit was no more than 8-10 days), or to meet and interview local inhabitants. While English is widely spoken in Uganda, Bundibugyo District is still considered remote and very few local residents that the author met were able/willing to communicate.

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challenged. It also reveals that the enduring legacy of colonial border-making in that current conservation stratagems (exemplified by TBNRM) aim to find ways of addressing conservation imperatives at locations where ecological areas are contiguous but divided by international borders.

This archival component of this paper demonstrates the decline of conservation following independence, the introduction of the Taungya system and subsequent attempts to remedy the damage caused by years of neglect. The researcher further shows how political insecurity coupled with population pressure eroded the authority of the UFD and harshly affected the forest environment. The study also confirms the legacy of many colonial conservation problems (e.g. poaching, encroachment, crop-raiding animals) at SNP today, and describes how current attempts to address these problems also reveal a strong legacy of colonial influence.

Finally, this study shows how the enabling conditions created by the political change in the late 1980s allowed Semuliki to be cleared of encroachers, and serious work begun to strengthen the institutional capacity of managing authorities. However the regional warfare of 1996-2000 severely disrupted any gains made in the preceding years and recovery and rebuilding efforts after that conflict continue at present. The future of conservation at SNP will depend largely on how this on-going conflict is resolved and how conservation strategies can be implemented in (border) areas of conflict and political instability.

Chapter 2 – A River without Fish? Semuliki Forest and the Origins of Conservation in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

Introduction

This chapter serves to introduce the case study of this thesis and examines the history of the area now known as Semuliki National Park.¹² For purposes of clarity, this chapter is divided into two sections:

- Early explorer/colonial accounts (beginning in the late 19th century)
- Management under the Uganda Protectorate Department of Forestry (1932-1960)

The purpose of this chapter extends beyond an introduction however, because the narrative history listed above also explicates colonial attitudes towards nature, conservation and (rural) development in Uganda. In the case of section one, the origins of conservation (discussed in Chapter One) are drawn out of the numerous explorers' recorded impressions of Semuliki Forest. Indicative of the colonial mindset that served to inform *general* colonial practice and policy in Uganda, these impressions are thus inextricably linked to colonial *conservation* practice and policy, which is discussed in section two of this chapter.

¹² It is important to note that the nomenclature (and indeed spelling) of the area now known as SNP has changed over time, referred to variously as Bwamba Forest, Semliki Forest, Semuliki Central Forest Reserve and finally Semuliki National Park. The river that forms the Uganda-Congo border is the Semliki River while SNP is also often mistaken for the Semliki Game Reserve (SGR). To make matters more confusing, Semliki Game Reserve is also known as Toro Game Reserve or an amalgamation of the two (Semliki-Toro Game Reserve). Although both SNP and SGR are protected areas, they are not contiguous.

A River Without Fish?

When the white men came, we thought you would steal the fish, so that is the name we told you, "Semuliki": River without fish.

From The Last King of Scotland (Voden, 1998 p.84)



Figure 3: Fishing traps over the Semliki River. Note the women emptying baskets in the foreground. Source: Christy, 1915

While formal administrative protection only began in 1932, the area now known as Semuliki National Park features frequently (albeit modestly) in numerous travel accounts from the late 19th and early 20th century. Explorers such as H.M. Stanley and H.H. Johnston are two of the more ‘celebrated’ travellers who had occasion to describe the Semuliki Forest, which lies between the northern end of the Ruwenzori Mountain range and the *Monts Bleus* or Blue Mountains. Taking its name from the Semliki River, the forest was frequented by a host of peripatetic Englishmen, often accompanied by their wives, occupied with exploring, describing, and later surveying the Uganda Protectorate. These men would soon focus their attention on the frontier with Belgian Congo and, by

implication, the correct plotting of the “30th meridian east of Greenwich” (Bright, 1909 p. 128).

Among the first Europeans of the 19th century to explore the region were Sir Samuel and Lady Baker in 1864, on the same journey that led to their ‘discovery’ of Lake Albert. Indeed, the Bakers provided the appellation ‘Blue Mountains’ as Bright (1909, p128) describes:

They first reached the lake [Albert] near its southern shore, and proceeded northwards in canoes along its eastern waters. To the west Baker saw the dim outlines of mountains partially obscured in the mist, which he named the ‘Blue mountains,’ but he formed no conception that what lay southwards, hidden behind the veil, were the ‘Mountains of the Moon’ [Ruwenzori] with their snow-tipped peaks - in truth the most magnificent range of mountains in the whole vast continent of Africa.

The majesty and mystery of the Ruwenzori provided a focal point in Western Uganda for many subsequent travellers, each attempting to scale and then map the highest peaks. In so doing, Johnston (1902, p. 22) offers an early account that accurately describes Semuliki Forest, “One suddenly enters a belt of extravagant West African forest, a forest which is now quite continuous with that of the Congo. This is the forest which stretches uninterruptedly to the upper Congo, and which crosses the lower part of the Semliki till it touches the flanks of Ruwenzori.” Like many of his compatriots, Johnston’s main preoccupations while travelling included the fauna and flora (which he describes in detail and lists in lengthy appendices) and Africans or ‘the natives’ (who are described in equal detail.) Semuliki Forest provided Johnston an opportunity to observe and describe both “that remarkable ruminant, the okapi” (ibid, p.38) and “the low, ape-like creature” (ibid,

p.16) the Pygmy, although in Johnston's case, the former proved more elusive than the latter.



Figure 4: Excerpt of map showing Ruwenzori Mountains and Semliki River. Source: Delme-Radcliffe, 1905

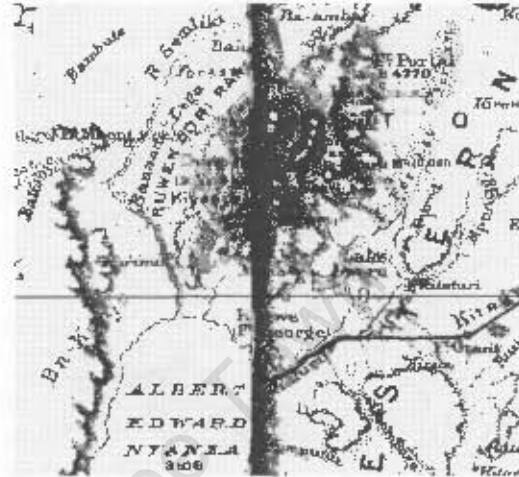


Figure 5: Excerpt of map showing Ruwenzori Mountains and Semliki River. Source: Johnston, 1902

Following Johnston, many others found reason to visit the Ruwenzoris and surrounds. Major and Mrs Powell-Cotton (1902-03), Rev. and Mrs Fisher (1903), Dr. Wollaston (1905), and Mr Dawe (1906) all led expeditions to the area, with various purposes ranging from ethnography and cartography, to 'discovering' and describing economically exploitable resources such as timber and minerals. As the region became increasingly exposed to Europeans (Belgians, Germans, British and others) disputes around the exact delineation of the Congo-Ugandan border arose. Fuelled by anti-Belgian sentiments regarding the treatment of 'natives,'¹³ British explorers increasingly recommended fixing the boundary along the course of the Semliki River. Dr. Wollaston, of the Natural History Department of the British Museum makes the above sentiment clear:

¹³ See Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost*, 1998

After many difficulties and delays, we arrived at Fort Beni, the Belgian post on the Semliki, about the middle of July. From there we set out with an escort, which the Belgian officer insisted on our taking—and which proved the cause of our undoing...In spite of protests, he camped in the natives' gardens, cut down the shambas, at one place shot the village cow, while his soldiers looted the houses. In return for these barbarities, they rose up against him, and we suffered for it. I am convinced that, had they let us go without escort, we should have had no trouble at all. When we left Beni a week ago, they were preparing a punitive expedition to quell these wretched people, and will doubtless make bad worse. So until all the natives have been killed off, or until the Semliki becomes the Uganda boundary, the west side of Ruwenzori will not be a very wholesome place for a white man (Freshfield and Wollaston, 1907, p.482).

Freshfield (Ibid, p.487) continues to explain that for reasons unknown;

It has been found that the 30th meridian east of Greenwich does not lie in the position previously assigned to it on all maps of Africa, but some miles farther east. In the instance under consideration, an arbitrary and imaginary line cutting first across the plain on the right bank of the Semliki and then transversely across innumerable forested spurs, must prove a most undesirable boundary. The time has now come when a frontier can readily be drawn in accordance with the physical features of the country. Nature has provided a natural boundary in the Semliki River. It should be adopted.

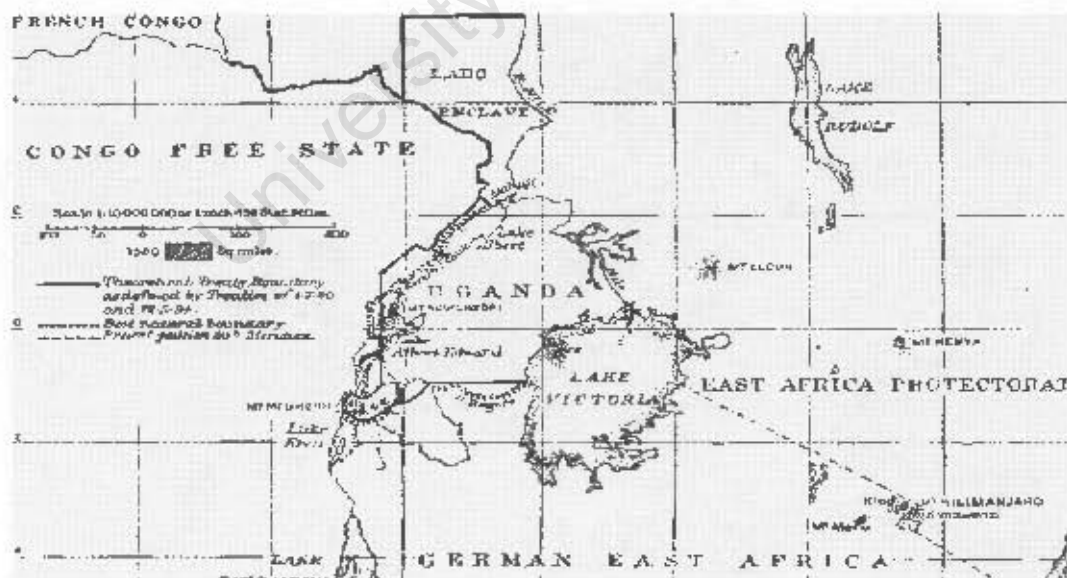


Figure 6: Map showing the theoretical border and the suggested boundary following the course of the Semliki River. Source: Freshfield and Wollaston, 1907.

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The consternation voiced above prompted a British Survey Commission led by Lieut. Col. Bright to settle the matter finally. Leaving England in 1907, Bright's group made their way to Uganda via Mombassa and Entebbe. Armed with two large theodolites courtesy of the British South Africa Company, and despite the usual setbacks of sickness and "acute fever" (Bright, 1909, p.150), the group completed their work within a year. Over and above producing a beautifully detailed map¹⁴ delineating the Uganda-Congo border and the protectorate as a whole, Bright compiled detailed ethnographic reports relating to 'native' hunting techniques and patterns. According to Bright, chief among 'native' hunters were the pygmy - forest inhabitants "on both sides of the Semliki" (Ibid, p. 149). Although admired for their tracking and tree-climbing techniques, Bright describes the pygmies in derogatory terms and with words typically associated with animals e.g. "prognathous" (Ibid.) The reports on hunting practices are ironic however, because the very acts which Bright records in such detail were outlawed only the previous year by the Uganda Game Ordinance of 1906. Based on similar laws enacted in Kenya, which were in turn based on medieval English laws, the Game Ordinance of 1906 stipulated, for the first time (in Uganda), who could hunt which animals, and under what circumstances (Naughton-Treves, 1999).

On Semuliki Forest, Bright was equally uncomplimentary (Ibid, p.135);

This eastern extremity of the great Etuli (*sic*) forest of equatorial Africa is often of the greatest density, though not always tropical in character. It is a dismal place, infested by stinging ants and insects, while the dampness and constant drip of water from the trees is wearisome in the extreme. The occasional glimpses of the sun through the thick foliage are welcome in the depressing gloom. Notwithstanding these disadvantages the forest is inhabited by the Pygmies.

¹⁴ A copy of which (dated 1909) was found rotting in Fort Portal archives.

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With the boundary agreed upon, Britain could now further pursue potential opportunities of resource extraction without the risk of provoking international conflict. A report by Dawe, published in 1910, offers an appraisal of the timber resources available in the Uganda protectorate. Unlike Bright's emotional descriptions, Dawe's accounts of Semuliki Forest are strictly vocational. He devotes significant passages to *Cynometra Alexandri* (the principal vegetation of SNP) describing its dispersal, foliage, bark and propensity to burn easily. He concludes that the trees of Semuliki Forest, providing a "hard, heavy, dense wood" (Dawes, 1910, p.125) with "fine, close grain ... should prove particularly suitable for railway sleepers." (Ibid). With the protectorate 'opening up' at an increasingly rapid rate, maintaining the railways required readily available timber. Described as the "Lunatic Line" (Tabor 2003, p. 225), for its sharp rise up from the coast and across the rift valley (Tabor 2003, p. 225) Uganda's railway line styled itself rather as a progression "step by step through Nature's zoo" (Ibid, p. 235) .

However, measures to better protect the 'zoo's' animal and plant inhabitants were soon to following in the form of increased colonial protection and the advancement of the Uganda Forest Department, discussed below.

The Forgotten Forest

The Uganda Forest Department

1898 saw the creation of The Scientific and Forestry Department of Uganda, but thirty four years were to pass before Semuliki Forest became a gazetted Forest Reserve. This is perplexing, considering that the previous paragraphs recount numerous visits and reports of the forest and surrounds as early as 1896.

The simple answer lies in the remote frontier location of the forest and the difficulty of traversing the Ruwenzori mountain range, prior (and subsequent) to the construction of the Fort Portal-Bundibugyo road in 1938.¹⁵ It is important to note here that Semuliki Forest has never been commercially exploited for timber, despite being initially protected and managed by the UFD.¹⁶ A more detailed examination of Ugandan Forestry history reveals that prior to the 1930's the Forest Department comprised of severely limited staff, charged with overseeing large areas of the protectorate's forests. The end result was a limited production of rubber and timber products from forests close to transport links, and largely unsuccessful attempts at plantation forests in different provinces. Indeed, the booklet *A History of the Uganda Forest Department 1898-1929* (UFD, 1951 p.11) laments the early years of Ugandan forestry in these words:

Most unfortunately, the chance to effect ... reservation [of forests] early in the history of European administration in Uganda was not taken, nor was much attention paid to this most important matter by forest officers during the next two decades. This caused Nicholson¹⁷ to comment in 1921 that "had half the money

¹⁵ Also known as the Fort Portal-Bwamba Road, this 50km dirt road winds its way round the Northern end of the Ruwenzoris and then sharply descends into the Semuliki Valley. (Roberts, forthcoming)

¹⁶ An organisation geared towards commercial exploitation and establishment and protection of forests.

¹⁷ Nicholson penned an unpublished paper in 1921 titled *The Future of Forestry in Uganda*

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spent on various afforestation schemes been spent on selection and demarcation, the forest position in Uganda would have been far sounder than it is to-day."

Selection and demarcation in 1932 notwithstanding, the Semuliki Forest Reserve (SFR) remained largely ignored by the forest department for various reasons. Leggat (1961, p 5) gives a rather succinct reasoning for Semuliki's status as the 'forgotten forest', when he recounts the involvement of the UFD at Semuliki Forest:

The first forestry record of this area is that of a botanical expedition by Dawe in 1906 to the Bwamba area. The next forest officer to visit the area was Chalk in 1923...and Fyfe in 1925. He recommended that exploitation [of Palm Oil], either departmentally or by private enterprise, be begun and plantations formed on a large scale at convenient centres, but there is no record of his recommendations having been adopted. In 1930, the Conservator of Forests visited the forest and noted that there was little danger of encroachment by farmers because it was protected through being a sleeping sickness area... Due to the presence of sleeping sickness and yellow fever and to shortages of staff and money, no development was possible for many years and the only work carried out was maintenance of boundaries...

The initial working plan for the forest (Dale, 1948 cited in Leggat, 1961) had only two prescriptions, namely, that the sole Forest Guard should maintain the boundary, and that the plan should be revised no later than 1958. Thus, because of its frontier location, difficult access, and infestation of disease carrying insects, Semuliki remained the Western Province's 'forgotten forest'. A methodical examination of UFD annual reports¹⁸ (beginning in 1905) corroborate the timescale laid out by Leggat above, and in this way, in fact, the lack of data on SFR reflects its relative unimportance in the forestry estate of the Uganda Protectorate.

¹⁸ These reports typically contain information describing Staff and Organisation, Forest Leases, Fuel Consumption, Research, Legislation and Notes briefly describing the different forest reserves.

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However, the epithet 'forgotten forest' is somewhat undeserved, because there exists a detailed (albeit patchy) documentary record of the management challenges and issues that arose in the running of the forest. Starting from 1944, the records highlight important themes and ideas many of which are still relevant to the current management of SNP.

These include:

- The descriptions of the prevalence of tsetse fly, yellow fever and malaria up until 1944
- The process of boundary contestation between 1950-55 that saw a portion of the park being excised for agriculture and settlement

As mentioned in Chapter One, the bulk of the archival material used in this project is housed at the Kampala office of the Ugandan NFA, while other important information is kept in district archives in Fort Portal.¹⁹ Used together, these archives allow an accurate reconstruction of the running of SFR, and give insight into the forest conservation ethos and attempts of an institution primarily geared towards forest utilisation (as opposed to conservation). As the following paragraphs will show, there existed a certain amount of tension between the imperatives of local inhabitants (who in certain cases recognised no official boundaries) and the development and conservation desires of colonial agriculture and forestry officials.

¹⁹ These documents are referenced as NFA (for the NFA archive housed in Kampala) and FP (representing the Fort Portal District Archive.) As the documents were never systematically archived, there is no reference number for each record. As such, each document cited is therefore referenced in the text listing; the relevant archive where the document was sourced and captured, the government department/official/individual composing the letter followed by the date. (E.g. NFA, UFD, 1957a). In the reference list each citation is referenced in entirety. Because it is practically impossible to access all the original archival material cited in this thesis (be it for purposes of reference checking or further reading), a digital copy of all archival material captured during the course of the research for this thesis is housed in the African Studies Library of the University of Cape Town.

Encroachment and Degazetting.

There are very strong medical reasons (sleeping sickness, yellow fever and malaria) why extreme caution should be exercised with regard to the proposal to open up the Semuliki Crown Forest, and there are also very strong general reasons (preservation of a fauna unique in east Africa) against the proposal.

Sgt. Hopkins, Entomologist (Medical). Letter to District Commissioner, Fort Portal, Toro, 1944

Despite these dire warnings, the local inhabitants of Bwamba County were able to thrive in the Sleeping Sickness zone, relatively out of the view of their colonial masters.²⁰ But with prosperity came the need for growth and expansion, which in turn required 'encroachment' into the Semuliki Forest Reserve. The public pressure was indeed so great that in 1953 local inhabitants were able to lobby for significant portions of the forest to be officially degazetted and opened up for settlement and agriculture. The process proved lengthy, symptomatic of colonial bureaucracy, with different parties seeking different channels of authority to air their views. The culmination of this lengthy process is reflected in a series of correspondence that spans the period between March and August of 1953 and includes an official statement by the Ugandan Governor, Sir Andrew Cohen. As this correspondence runs to numerous pages, a brief summary of the key letters are given below, followed by comment and analysis:

The correspondence begins in March of 1953 with a letter from the District Commissioner (DC), Toro to the Provincial Commissioner (PC), Western Province in which he states that "the opening up of certain areas of Bwamba should be regarded as "quid pro quo" for the establishment of a National Park (NFA, DC Toro. 1953a). He

²⁰ If compared with their compatriots in other areas of the Toro Kingdom and Uganda at large.

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attributes population growth and prosperity in the area as the result of migration of settlers from other parts of the Uganda protectorate and the Congo. He also reminds his superior that populated areas in Bwamba were heavily cultivated with coffee and cotton, and that inhabitants had expressed the desire for agricultural expansion for many years prior to 1953. As a district official he felt that political and economic considerations should take precedence over conservation (provided areas remaining under protection were protected to a greater degree) and he recommended three areas for excision, limiting immigration to Uganda nationals only.

A month later, on 7 April 1953, the PC, Western Province wrote to the Chief Secretariat in Entebbe informing him of the proposals to open up certain areas of the forest to cultivation and settlement. The PC was worried that "releasing a small amount [of land] might create the perception among the 'natives' that all of the forest is up for grabs" (NFA, PC WP, 1953b). However, the PC also acknowledged that population growth could not be ignored and other than excising portions of the forest reserve, the only other option was to forcibly remove people from the area. As he notes, "It would be extremely difficult to persuade local inhabitants to move when vast areas adjacent to their crops remain unused" (Ibid). By way of conclusion he notes that the significant political advantages to decommissioning certain parts of the reserve far outweigh any conservation concerns.

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While the two letters referred to above represent the political point of view, a letter dated 27 May, 1953 from the District Forest Officer (DFO), Toro to the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Entebbe expounds the conservation opinion regarding the proposed excisions. He asserts that the DC (quoted above) had made certain incorrect assumptions regarding the proposal. They include (NFA, DFO, 1953c):

1. That there was a shortage of land in Bwamba as a whole with no land other than the Semuliki Forest suitable for agriculture and settlement.
2. That the Forest Reserve was even suitable for cultivation.
3. That controlling immigration was realistic.
4. That there were no medical reasons against opening certain areas of the Forest.
5. And finally, that it was in fact expedient to thus soothe the local agitation.

Despite these seemingly contrary viewpoints (of the two letters cited above), the DFO recommended acquiescing to the demands of the farmers on condition that additional forested areas would be protected to offset the loss at Semuliki. Scarcely two weeks later, on 13 June 1953, these recommendations were echoed by the CCF, Entebbe, in a letter to the Provincial Forest Officer (PFO), Western Province (NFA, CCF, 1953d).

If you can get additional land in Mwenge, even at the expense of some release in Semuliki, it would seem a good thing...As I see it, the position can be summarised as follows: Semliki as it exists is of doubtful significance from a forestry point of view but has fauna and flora interest... Release of Semliki can be considered if additional softwood land is reserved in Mwenge.

Replying to the CCF on 6 July 1953, the PFO informed his superior that despite agreement between the DC, the Agricultural Department and the UFD to excise land, it was nonetheless important to consider that the local Chief refuted the legality of the

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entire Forest Reserve and recognised no boundaries, including those which closed the area in 1911 due to sleeping sickness. Furthermore he informed that the chief was the primary agitator for more land and stood to benefit the most from increasing his already substantial cash crops such as coffee, cotton and rice (NFA, PFO, 1953e).

Approximately seven weeks later, on 23 August 1953, the Ugandan Governor, Sir Andrew Cohen addressed the local people of Bwamba, hoping to settle the matter once and for all (NFA, Governor Cohen, 1953f).

...For a number of years the people of Bwamba have been pressing for the release of areas in the Bwamba Forest ... for cultivation. I will now tell you the decision which has been reached in this matter but first I am going to describe the general problem involved. I ask you to listen carefully. First of all the people of Bwamba must realise that there can be no question of any large area of the reserve being released. It is because no-one has been allowed to live in the reserve that sleeping sickness has been kept away from Bwamba...It is absolutely necessary to keep a wide barrier along the Semuliki to keep the people from Bwamba free from this very serious disease... Therefore the people must understand that in their own interests and for their own protection Government can only agree to the release of strictly limited areas...Government is not prepared to open these areas for any purpose other than cultivation of food crops... There are other areas... where coffee can be grown. These particular areas in the reserve are for feeding the Bamba (*sic*) ... It will be for the people of Bwamba to show in the next five years that they can make good use both of the land inside the reserve and the land outside it. I will tell you how you must make the best use of the land: you must make real and successful use of the methods of soil conservation (which include the reservation of poor farming land or land too steep for farming, as local government forest reserves)... People must take up and make good use of empty land outside the reserve and the advice of the Agricultural and Forestry Departments must be followed... I believe that these decisions will be of real help to the people of Bwamba if the people will follow the advice which I have given them to-day.

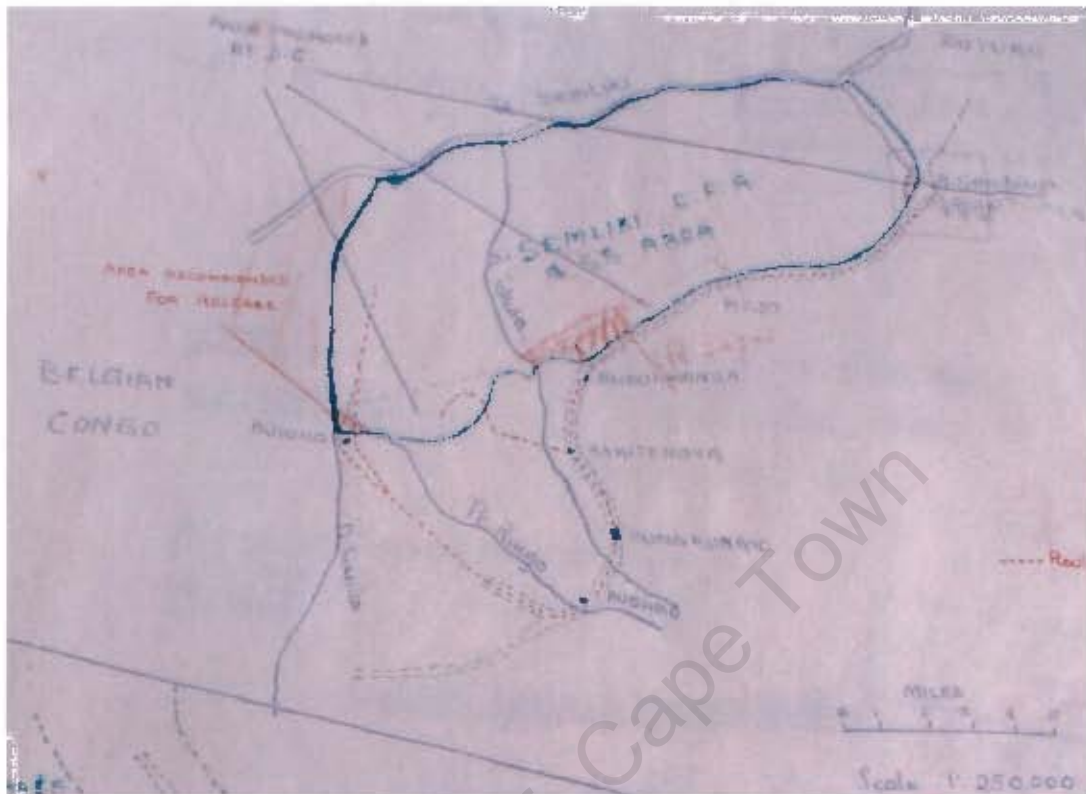


Figure 7: Hand drawn map dated 1953 showing area considered for excision. Source: NFA, 1953.

The correspondence set out above is highly revealing, because it gives insight into the somewhat schizophrenic nature of the colonial administration in East Africa. Throughout the correspondence we are reminded that SFR was seen as a unique conservation commodity, but of little commercial value for the forest department. In this way, SFR became a bargaining tool for the UFD to secure more productive land for commercially important softwood production. Politically, the government was seen to be providing for the people of Bwamba, continually stressing their health and safety, as well as motivating the further entrenchment of colonial farming techniques. Thus the concerns of the politicians, foresters, conservationists and local inhabitants were contested, negotiated and finally settled, albeit by a very patronising pronouncement by the Governor. These

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initial requests would, however, pave the way for further contestation and negotiation regarding access to and utilisation of forest resources, both from the inhabitants of Bwamba and a commercial partner of the UFD, Kagera Saw Mills.

Logging request

In October of 1955, Kagera Saw Mills lodged an official request to log Muhimbi or Ironwood from Semuliki Forest Reserve. The UFD posed no opposition to the request, but warned the potential contractor of the difficult haul and the medical restrictions.

As you realise, the extraction route up the escarpment is very difficult and all loads will have to be moved at night. Farther it is possible that heavy loads may cause serious deterioration of the road surface. This being so your project must definitely be considered experimental, in the initial stages, and should it prove later that your lorries cause excessive damage to the road surface you may be directed to close down your mill. The Semuliki forest is in a Sleeping Sickness area and your staff will have to conform to all instructions, examination. etc, under the Sleeping Sickness ordinance..." (NFA, PFO, 1955a)

Despite these clear prescriptions Mr Grewald, of the Kagera Saw-Mill Company, had grander plans for commercial Ironwood exploitation in SFR. With firm orders for 50 tonnes per month of cut Ironwood, and further plans to sell Ironwood floorboards to markets in London (NFA, PFO, 1955b), it quickly became apparent that Semuliki Forest, due to its geographical location and the quality of access roads, was still not suitable for commercial utilization. Ultimately, bureaucracy prevailed and the request was limited by the Provincial Forest Officer, Western Province when he wrote, "If Kagera Saw mills were (*sic*) allowed to carry out this programme it would have to be in the nature of a new concession. I am not in favour of this at the present time, as it will mean additional duties for the D.F.O., who has already more than enough of arrears of District administration to catch up with" (Ibid).

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The Chief Conservator of Forests in Entebbe however felt obliged to accommodate both the PFO and his clients at Kagera Sawmills. Replying to his PFO (NFA, CCF, 1955c) he again highlights the untapped potential of the forest, "...there are 2 general points to be borne in mind, (a) it is desirable that the Semliki (sic) should be put to some productive use, (b) the present cut of Muhimbi in Uganda is a fraction of the potential yield."

Unfortunately the documentary record of the Kagera Sawmill application ends here, and no further mention of serious logging in SFR is found in any archival sources the researcher captured.²¹ However, it is a revealing series of correspondence because it highlights the tenuous balance between conservation and exploitation that was forced upon the UFD by virtue of geography and the physical barrier of the Ruwenzori Mountain Range.

The balance between exploitation and conservation at SNP under colonial rule had however always been weighted towards conservation, as the historical record, and the above discussion shows. However, towards the end of 1959, further proposals were mooted to open up the SFR for increased cultivation and settlement by the local population. In this instance, unlike the case of 1953 described above, the UFD had no means of securing other forested areas (for silvicultural purposes) as a replacement for land conceded. Somewhat inexplicably, the proposal for further concessions was channelled to the UFD through the chairman of the Uganda Wildlife Commission

²¹ In fact, following the Kagera Sawmill Correspondence of 1955, the archives contain no further data up until November of 1959. Unfortunately, this is not the only instance where large amounts of data are missing as correspondence from the years 1961-65 and 1966-69 is similarly absent.

(UWC). As independence in Congo and Uganda drew ever nearer, the UWC sought comment on the request to further open Semuliki²². In response Dr Haddow of the Virus Research Institute at Entebbe, penned an eloquent approbation of SFR, describing its unique flora and fauna, and the necessity to pursue measures of conservation, while simultaneously assenting to local demands. Because both his memorandum and the preface thereof offer further insight into colonial perceptions of conservation, and the nature of the social boundaries that interlink with the boundaries of SFR and the Congo, they are quoted at length below (NFA, Haddow, 1960a):

Should the Congo achieve independence in the near future I think that we may reasonably expect the largest 'population increase' that Bwamba (County) has seen in recent years. Much as I like the Baamba I must admit that they are people who do not seem able to withstand the impact of other more forceful races, and those on the Congo side may soon find themselves being crowded out by more virile and determined members of other tribes...

In 1942 and for some years after, the [Bwamba] road led through dense, unbroken forest from the hot springs to Bukukwanga, five miles from Bundibugyo...Gradually all the forest south of the road began to disappear with the exception of only a few small reserves. By 1946...the heavy forest was mainly confined to the north and west sides of the road, where it was, of course protected as a crown reserve... In Bwamba, when forest is felled it is replaced by tall grass, often elephant grass, and this has happened in many of the areas concerned...It cannot be over emphasized that in the case of climax forest such errors may take several hundred years to rectify, if indeed, they can ever be rectified...

What would be the result of removing the forest in these lowland areas? I believe that it would yield an area of land of the most indifferent quality agriculturally in which rivers would run wild and erosion on a really serious scale would be inevitable...On the forest itself I am not well equipped to speak technically. I have, however, had the privilege of visiting some of the other great rain forest formations of the world...[and] I have not anywhere seen a climax forest which can compare with the ironwood consociation of the Mpulya River²³...This timber is virtually valueless, I suppose, but the formation is unique. Surely, we can save it? I know that there are territories where Forest Departments may be unable to see the trees for the wood but this can never have been said of Uganda.

²² UWC made this request to DR Haddow, a veteran colonial inhabitant of Bwamba County and the Semuliki forest itself.

²³ An area within Semuliki.

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What can be done? In the past few years, I have been keenly aware of the embarrassment that can be caused when workers – often very competent in their own line, begin to diverge into others and offer advice on game management, land policy etc... It is therefore with the utmost diffidence that I put forward the following suggestion: I believe it would be possible to take the “pressure” off the forest if the people were allowed to hunt in it... The larger animals would bear the brunt, it is true, but the valuable and irreplaceable elements (not of much use for food or hides) might be saved. After all, why should they [the Baamba] not hunt in the forest? What real harm could it do...? It might be possible to save the Forest itself, which is the prime consideration.

Dr Haddow's memorandum is informative on many levels. Somewhat uniquely for the era in question, his recommendations seek a meaningful compromise between both conservation and social imperatives. Tellingly however, his suggestions fail to consider what contemporary conservationists would call the ‘biodiversity’ of SFR. In fact, his primary interest lay in the functions that the forest served concerning drainage from the slopes of the Ruwenzoris, and the areas where the flora was unique because of its homogeneity. This is not to suggest that such concepts were known and that Dr Haddow erred in his appraisal but rather to highlight and stress how conservation praxis has changed.

Nonetheless, this correspondence and the subsequent decision by the CCF to delay the Baamba requests for land acquisition for a further two years (NFA, CCF, 1960b) represents the final documentary evidence of the UFD relating to SFR prior to independence in 1962.

Conclusion

In summation, the study argues that the superior conservation status of SFR, as a forest estate within the UFD, arose *primarily* because of geographical and logistical impediments that hindered commercial exploitation, and only *secondly*, in recognition of the matchless ecological phenomena that occur within the protected area. Geographical barriers notwithstanding, the physical boundaries of SFR were successfully rearranged and reduced by local inhabitants, to accommodate population growth and increased agricultural production.

This chapter has illustrated the malleable nature of the borders of SNP (both national and international) and has shown how these borders were constructed and subsequently challenged. Chapter Three will focus on further changes at SNP, the impact of challenges across the international boundary of the forest, and the current conservation trend towards transboundary protected areas.

Chapter 3: Lost and Found – Semuliki after Independence

Introduction

This chapter continues to consider the history of Semuliki National Park, focusing on the period after Ugandan independence up to the present day. For purpose of clarity this chapter is divided into two sections:

- After Independence: Encroachment and Taungya²⁴ during Uganda's "Lost Years".
- Conflict and conservation: the IUCN, national park status and war in the Great Lakes.

As with the previous chapters, this chapter charts the narrative history of SNP focussing on the changing trajectories of conservation practice. It is here that the conceptual and practical changes in conservation described in Chapter One are made explicitly clear. Following Ugandan Independence, the status of SNP remained relatively low within the UFD and (as with the years immediately prior to independence) documentary evidence for much of this time period is scarce, fragmented and in numerous cases disappointingly banal.²⁵ It is for this reason (and many others) that the 1970s and early 1980s are referred to as Uganda's "Lost Years" (Pomeroy et al., 2002 p.7)²⁶ This point notwithstanding, there is some surviving archival material from 1961 onwards that records the planting of

²⁴ A system whereby local communities are invited to clear and cultivate the forest until such time as indigenous timber trees planted by the Ugandan Forest Department grow and 'edge out' cultivation" (UWA, 2005 p.1).

²⁵ Random files containing information such as fuel/repair expenditure for UFD vehicles, or monthly salary records for junior staff.

²⁶ It is a sad irony that the 'Lost Years' refer not only to opportunities and lives lost, but also to vast amounts of physical archival material. As Farmer relates (2005, Pers. Com.), as a result of paper shortages during the 1970s and 1980s, Ugandan street vendors selling small parcels of nuts etc. would use archival records to package their wares. These convenient and economic parcels are still readily available across Uganda. However, the current ubiquitous form of packaging (certainly in Kampala) is, surprisingly, pages from high school text books.

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experimental Taungya plots, Pygmy 'encroachment' in the Forest Reserve circa 1969, and Taungya expansion from 1970. This material will be considered in greater detail below.

The environmental 'damage' at Semuliki Forest wrought by Taungya and institutional neglect would however soon come to the attention of international NGOs and donors towards the end of the 1980s,²⁷ along with much of Uganda's forest and conservation estate. An Integrated Conservation and Development Project (ICDP) was drafted for Semuliki and Kibale Forest Reserves and endured three phases that saw involvement from the IUCN, the Ugandan Ministry of Water, Lands and Environment, and the Ugandan Wildlife Authority. With political upheaval between 1997 and 2000, the ICDP suffered significant setbacks (Chege et al, 2002) and SNP became an area of violence and conflict not seen in its history thus far (Ibid).

Fortunately, SNP and the residents of Bundibugyo County are slowly recovering from the violence and destruction,²⁸ and park management is under the effective control of UWA. Together with numerous environmental NGOs and donor partners, UWA is focused on both short and long term management questions and issues at SNP, such as the welfare of the local Pygmy community and the possibility of meaningful TBNRM initiatives with neighbouring DRC. These points are considered in Chapter Four.

²⁷ Some years after the rise of current president, Yoweri Museveni in 1986.

²⁸ Although rebel groups are still at large in the Ituri forest of neighbouring DRC and a large and active Ugandan army contingent is posted in the town of Bundibugyo.

After Independence: Encroachment and Taungya during Uganda's "Lost Years".

In October of 1962, the United Nations admitted Uganda as an independent country under the leadership of Prime Minister Milton Obote. Between 1962 and 1985 Obote would fall from (and return to) leadership three times, indicating the political volatility of this time period. His challengers would include the infamous Idi Amin, as well as General Tito Okello – the tyrant that inadvertently contributed to the rise of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and current Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni. Needless to say, the succession of coups, warfare and brutality had detrimental effects across Uganda, but for many Ugandans it was also a time of access to previously restricted resources and of perceived rightful return to land taken under colonialism, even if it meant a life of 'serfdom' to the state.²⁹ Such is the case with Semuliki Forest, as will be seen below.

Introducing Taungya

Spanning the period between 1962 and 1974, the implementation of the Taungya system at Semuliki seems to dominate the patchy archival records. The first mention of Taungya appears in the 1961-71 Semuliki Management Plan (Leggatt, 1961. p.12), and simply states:

The existing poor type of forest will be replaced by a better type either by suitable treatment or by planting or by both...To minimise costs of clearing and to assist the local people with food production, planting should, if possible, be done on the taungya system. Farmers will be encouraged to clear the forest and plant food crops in areas selected for plantations.

²⁹Amin abolished private and communal ownership, effectively making all Ugandans tenants of the state.

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In 1962 trials began with necessary seed procured for planting. By 1965 the trials were running “exceptionally well” (NFA, DFO, 1965) and the District Forest Officer for Toro recommended to his superiors expanding the trials to include other species (Ibid). In the following years it appears however that funding for (and interest in) the Taungya trials at Semuliki waned, until the ‘encroachment’ of Pygmies into the forest reserve in 1969 revitalised demands by other Bwamba residents for access to the forest in 1970s.³⁰

Pygmy ‘Encroachment’

A letter of enquiry/rebuke from the DFO to the lone Semuliki Forest Guard, dated 28 February 1969 (NFA, DFO, 1969c) unceremoniously returns the Pygmies of Semuliki to the narrative being recounted here and raises the issue of a “clearing... [having] been made in January near the road in Semuliki reserve and the Pygimies (*sic*) settled (*sic*) there.”(Ibid.) As no previous mention of the Pygmy community in Semuliki is found in the UFD archival material,³¹ the author assumes that prior to this incident in 1969, this group had never posed any ‘problem’ to the UFD. While the terms, ‘clearing’ and ‘settled’ in the quote above infers the root of the problem, Frankland (2001), in his

³⁰ The only other significant letter of 1969 regards an unsuccessful request by one Sgt. Tamukkedde to develop a tourist attraction at the Semuliki hot springs. The tone of the request indicates the complete confidence of petty military officials in seeking out private business opportunities on public land (NFA, Tamukkedde, 1969a).

I am interested in developing the Hot Springs at Sempaya privately . I have already approached the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism... Fortunately, they are all in favour of my scheme and have promised to give me all possible encouragement. I understand that a part of these Hot Springs is in the Forest Reserve. I shall, therefore, be very grateful if you will help me to de-gazette one hundred acres involved which will enable me to lease altogether about three hundred for this development which will not(*sic*) doubt be another tourist attraction.

The Regional Forest Officer subsequently suggested to his CCF that the idea was such a good one, the UFD should pursue the development ‘in house’; “otherwise there will always be a request by the Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism wishing to take it over.” (NFA, RFO, 1969b).

³¹ Beyond the fact of their existence.

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admirable piece *Pygmic Tours*, asserts that the Pygmy community at Semuliki had been the subject of tourist visits continuously since the 1940's. This implies then that at the very least, this community had been continuously accessible to outsider tourists and not so deep within the forest as to completely escape the notice of the errant UFD guard.

While the above point is difficult to clarify, it is clear that the guard's failure to report the new clearing to his superiors earned him a severe rebuke. However, a simple solution by the Regional Forest Officer (RFO) was soon proposed whereby the Pygmies would be resettled in an already encroached forest reserve nearby "without much delay" (NFA, RFO, 1969d). However, his subordinate DFO thought it expedient to remind him that "the settlement of the Pygmies is a delicate matter in that their settlement is handled by the Government." (NFA, DFO, 1969e). Ultimately, the matter remained unresolved (unfortunately the archival material makes no further mention of this case) and the Pygmy clearing remained, serving as the antecedent for other Bwamba residents to again demand and receive further access to the Forest. While the archival data makes no further reference to the Pygmy 'problem', it is important to stress here that the Pygmy community continued to live in their clearing until well into the 1990s when they were moved to a purpose-built housing settlement.³² Although the issue of their 'encroachment' was soon to be eclipsed by a much larger threat, discussed immediately below, their plight would eventually return to the attention of the managing authorities as will be seen later in the chapter.

³² The Seventh-Day Adventist Church Development Arm (ADRA) motivated and funded the project. The Pygmy community subsequently abandoned the houses and returned to a small clearing and makeshift huts just within the park boundary near Ntandi.

Taungya Revisited

We [are] a group of people who were forcibly removed from the area...which is now a forest reserve. We were removed from this place in 1924 because of a deadly disease...We now know that Government Experts (*sic*) have proved that the disease has been eradicated... Since 1924 the population of Bwamba has increased very steadily...[and] we are squeezed. The Government has introduced the idea of group farming, which we are interested (*sic*), but we have no where to carry it out... Sir, we feel that the Semuliki Forest reserve is the only field in which we can fulfil our ambitions. Bearing in mind that the Government is for the good of the common man, we promise we shall abide by the interests of the Government (NFA, Muguruka, Undated).

Although undated, this letter is filed with UFD correspondence from 1970/1 that addresses the expansion of Taungya trials in Semuliki, and the implication is that this request prompted the renewed consideration of Taungya at Semuliki, beyond trial plots. In specifying the reasons for and conditionality of the system, the UFD took great pains to emphasise that the reasons for allowing Taungya were primarily related to population pressure and the lack of economic exploitation of Semuliki timber (NFA, RFO, 1971) echoing the reasons given for the 1953 excision described in Chapter Two. In 1971 the Agricultural Department, in conjunction with the UFD, issued a formal contract for Taungya farmers (see appendix B) stipulating clearly the numerous 'procedures' and 'conditions' by which they were expected to abide. They include:

- Farming on parcels of land no bigger than a ½ hectare.
- Only one parcel of land per farmer/family.
- No felling of timber outside of farming areas.
- Only non-perennial food crops to be planted – millet, groundnuts, beans and certain banana types.
- Cultivation limited to a three year period.
- No building of houses on or near plots.

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However, scarcely one year after issuing permits, the UFD received the first of numerous requests for permanent settlement near crops and allowance for cash-crop cultivation. Penned by the same community leader quoted above (and forwarded to the UFD via the Office of the President) the farmers in fact informed the President/UFD that "because of wild animals which are destroying our permitted crops, the farmers have been forced to build small houses in the area against Government's advice." (NFA, Muguruka, 1972.) The *de facto* establishment of dwellings in Semuliki, and the lack of any repercussions for the farmers, soon saw many of the 'conditions' mentioned above being ignored or officially overturned. The example of cocoa, below, provides further insight and again highlights the struggles between differing government departments and community representatives with their own respective agendas (FP, Bemuweaba, 1973).

I have the honour to inform you that the Cocoa Development Scheme, Bwamba, approached your Senior Forest Guard of the Semuliki Forest Reserve, Bwamba, to allow it a two acre land of forest (*sic*) near the Pygmies along the road to Fort Portal... This is very urgent and important to the Ministry as well as the inhabitants of the area...After consideration of the matter with the Gombolola Chief ...the Senior Forest Guard allowed us to start and we are sure, that as we are of the same Ministry, cooperation and action will always be considered a priority as already done (*sic*).

As with the case of building houses in the reserve, the above letter is not so much a request as a statement of actions already carried out, a description of an apparently irreversible chain of events. Here too the documentary record reveals no response from the UFD other than a written rebuke to the forest guard responsible, and his subsequent denial of any wrongdoing. This type of inaction by the UFD again led to a situation whereby local inhabitants no longer felt bound to *any* UFD regulations. Severe

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encroachment by many unregistered farmers led to greater cultivation within the forest (beyond specified plots), increased habitation within the forest, and a steady increase in the growth of cash crops. By 1978,³³ the farmers were numerous and confident enough to put forth a proposal suggesting official degazetting of a large portion of the Forest Reserves. As with the undated request/proposal for settling near their crops (quoted above), in the 1978 letter, the farmers assert their historical rights to the land and forest, their forced eviction in 1924 due to sleeping sickness, and their continuous desire to return to the land. While the tone and style of the letter reflects the due sense of propriety required in addressing a government official, the writers clearly have little fear or concern for negative repercussions from the UFD, even going so far as to invite UFD officials to witness the situation in person. This suggests the farmers' confidence in the facts speaking louder than the law, again evoking the sense of a course of events that the farmers perceived as irreversible and simply requiring the approval of the government. The following excerpt elucidates (NFA, Karusale, 1978):

...I assure you that the area is no longer a forest but it is completely covered with crops. Everyone in Bwamba is entirely depending on this area for food. This area is about 81 square (*sic*) miles, We (*sic*) still insist that the Government kindly allow us to settle in at least 60 square (*sic*) miles and the left be rest for Forestry...Please receive our delegation for face to face discussion (*sic*). We further request you to come and visit the area so that you see for yourself how the area is no longer a forest but is completely covered with crops.

Unfortunately, there is no recorded response to the above requests or any indication if UFD officials did engage the farmers "face to face." However a letter dated 1979 from the DFO addressed to the Bubukwangwa sub-county chief (name unknown), implies that

³³ There are no relevant data sets between the periods 1974 and 1977.

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some type of official inspection took place (FP, DFO, 1979). The DFO took pains to clear himself and his department of any wrongdoing or complicity and suggested that the chief in question take full responsibility for “confusing the people” (Ibid.) into thinking Semuliki was open for settlement. The DFO warned of possible evictions and further cautioned the chief with a somewhat inexplicable threat: “Please do not encourage people in reserves as it may become detrimental on your past” (Ibid.) However, despite the threat, and the attention of the Chief Forests Officer (CFO), the UFD again failed to take any effective action. A letter dated November 1980 from the CFO to the DFO (NFA, CFO, 1980) suggested giving encroachers six months to vacate their plots and build new homes outside the reserve. Almost two years later, the DFO reported only mixed success to his superiors (NFA, DFO, 1982):

After my constant appeal to the above mentioned defaulters, I am glad to inform you that of the people reported to you, only five of them have left the plots, the rest stubbornly remain. As per being hostile, I am glad to report that they have dropped the habit. Those who left the plots demolished their houses. Meanwhile I await further instructions from your office.

It appears that the requested instructions never materialised, and two years later, in 1984, the CFO was still requesting from the DFO “information as to whether all the encroachers have pulled out” (NFA, CFO, 1984). Unfortunately, this question remains unanswered within the documentary record; however, it is correct to assume that the encroachers did not willingly leave the forest.

Subsequent to the above letter, the archives contain no data relevant to Semuliki up until 1987, one year after the rise of the NRM and President Museveni. Indicative again of the ‘lost years’, the lack of comprehensive records throughout the 1960s and 70s also reflects

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the lack of management capacity within the UFD in general (Hamilton, 1984; Struhsaker, 1987) and interest regarding Semuliki Forest specifically. Despite producing a management plan in 1961, the UFD seems to have ignored most of the prescriptions therein, leaving only one guard to man the 220 km² reserve. As with the descriptions in Chapter One, the institutional neglect described here is directly related to the remote location of the forest and the lack of commercial opportunity for the UFD. In terms of conservation practice, it is clear that during the time period discussed above, conservation issues were of little or no priority. Local inhabitants were able to access the forest, because there was no real authority to stand in their way. Whether this lack of authority within the UFD was a direct response to colonial styles of management³⁴ or a result of near continuous political upheaval remains to be seen, but the consequences remained the same, and encroachments continued unabated until 1988. However, as will be seen in the following sections, political stability (and subsequent lack thereof) soon became the defining factor in the implementation of a renewed conservation ethic that successfully halted Taungya while simultaneously attempting to address social concerns.

³⁴ i.e. a perceived Africanisation of the rules governing the environment.

Conflict and Conservation: the IUCN, National Park Status and war in the Great Lakes.

The issue of deforestation in Uganda clearly revolves around the classic conflict between short-term, non-sustainable exploitation on the one hand, and long term sustainable planning on the other. Ineffective enforcement combined with antiquated management plans, political and economic pressure and population growth are tilting the balance of this conflict towards irreversible deforestation.

Is it ... in the best interest of the nation that one department should have the exclusive authority both to protect and to exploit such a natural resource?

Thomas Struhsaker, 1987.

National Park Status

The rise of the National Resistance Movement in 1986 heralded the beginning of Uganda's emergence from approximately 25 years of civil wars and oppressive (often militaristic) regimes. Focused on transforming Uganda "from a poor peasant society into a modern, industrial, united and prosperous society" (NRM, 2006). The NRM paved the way for the political stability necessary for effective intervention at Semuliki and many other Protected Areas (PAs) in Uganda. Realising the ineptitude of its own Forest Department, the Ugandan Ministry of Environmental Protection requested the help of the IUCN³⁵ in 1988 to address Uganda's precarious forestry/wildlife situation³⁶ (Muhweezi, Pers. Com. 2005). With regard to Semuliki, the IUCN was initially co-opted with three specific roles in mind (Ibid), namely;

- To strengthen general institutional management.
- To assist with the implementation of community focused conservation.
- To help with a rapid biodiversity appraisal to design long term plans.

³⁵ With funding provided by The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)

³⁶ By 1988, damning reports on the state of Uganda's forests had been published by Hamilton 1984 and Strushaker 1987 and others.

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However, the involvement of the IUCN alone was not enough to address the most pressing concern at Semuliki, namely people farming and living within the forest. It is important to note then that the first meaningful attempts to address the problem of encroachment at Semuliki were only undertaken in a political climate where environmental factors were considered important and, after direct intervention by the President. The UFD failed for 14 years to control and evict encroachers at Semuliki, yet after a singular visit by Yoweri Museveni in 1988, the matter was settled within 4 months. Consider the following report from DFO Butoono to the CFO in contrast to similar reports recorded above (NFA, DFO, 1988a).

When His Excellency the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni visited Bundibugyo district on 23rd April this year [1988], he made it very clear to the people of Bundibugyo in particular and to the entire nation at large that encroachers must leave forest reserves, for the sole purpose of maintaining the environment. Following this visit, I gave out eviction notices to encroachers residing and cultivating in Semuliki...By 31st July 1988, all the encroachers in Semuliki Forest Reserve had left.³⁷

As with the case of degazetting in 1953 (see Chapter Two), direct communication from the highest authority in Uganda was the only way to effectively settle the matter. Although the residents did protest their eviction prior to Museveni's speech (NFO, Kawamara 1987), they ultimately listened to his appeal, and began to acknowledge the authority of the Forest Department. This was helped by the UFD itself which became significantly more proactive at Semuliki, employing local residents to assist in boundary

³⁷ In an earlier draft, DFO Butoono took the liberty of paraphrasing Museveni's Speech thus (NFA, DFO 1988b):

On 23rd April, 1988, His Excellency the President visited Bundibugyo District and told the Wanaichi (ordinary folk) pointblank (*sic*) that whoever wanted to destroy the forests was not his ally. That, that person would be an enemy of the nation. He educated the Wanaichi on [how] the destruction of forests in North Africa created the Sahara Desert, which precedent he never wanted to occur in Uganda (*sic*).

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demarcation by cutting the bush or planting *Cassia Siamea* where necessary³⁸ (Ibid.)

It is important to note that, despite the lack of management during the 1960s, 70s and early 1980s, the singularity and uniqueness [in East Africa] of the fauna and flora found at Semuliki was not lost on the different departments within the newly created Ministry of Environmental Protection. Increased IUCN involvement and ongoing biodiversity assessments would make this fact ever more apparent, precipitating an internal institutional feud over which department would control Semuliki and the changes planned to take place there.³⁹

The planning and institutional wrangling continued until 1993 when the Government of Uganda, as a means of further formalising the conservation status of the forest, gazetted Semuliki, together with Kibale forest reserve, as National Parks. While this had serious legal implications regarding resource use⁴⁰ it also allowed for the implementation of 'phase two' of IUCN involvement,⁴¹ whereby community-based conservation programs were established to address various issues including (Kidiya et al, 2004):

- Sustainable use of natural resources within national parks.
- The empowerment of women to partake in and benefit from conservation

³⁸ While the planting of *Cassia Siamea* proved effective in boundary demarcation, it soon became problematic as an invasive species (see Ogwal, 1995) and is currently a top management priority at SNP (UWA, 2005b)

³⁹ As Kamugisha (2005, pers comm.) relates, the IUCN exacerbated existing tensions between the Forest Department, Game Department and National Parks Department. The former two would eventually merge to form UWA, the current managing authority of SNP.

⁴⁰ At that time (1993) there was no legal policy for extraction of any resources within Ugandan National Parks. UWA would subsequently implement directives to address this issue at SNP and other parks with a history of traditional resource extraction .

⁴¹ Phase one including the eviction of farmers and the reestablishment of visible boundaries, described above.

planning.

- Increasing environmental awareness within local communities

However, despite these positive attempts, many of the ICDP activities⁴² aimed at addressing these issues were confined to Kibale National Park (KNP) (Ibid.), where the need was perceived to be greater than at SNP, and where institutional and local capacity was considered stronger. This is not to suggest that SNP was ignored within the KSCDP, but rather that due to several constraints (such as logistics and funding) KNP served as a testing ground for activities and initiatives that would materialise (in differing forms) at SNP after the termination of the KSCDP in 2002. Furthermore, with the onset of the violence in the region in 1996 all conservation activities at SNP became radically curtailed or completely non-existent. The details and plans of the IUCN are important in understanding the changing conservation narratives at SNP, however the conflict with neighbouring DRC rendered much of the early work (1988-1996) at SNP meaningless. Put simply, no community remained in the area to participate in community/conservation activities and no staff or infrastructure remained to implement any management or conservation initiatives. With this in mind, the author will examine the specifics of the new conservation paradigm at SNP (i.e. 'phase three' and beyond) after briefly considering the background, importance and implications of the war in the Great Lakes, which follows below.

⁴² E.g.: Income generating activities such as pig farming and bee keeping; addressing problem animals and diversifying tourist activities (Ibid.)

War in the Great Lakes

I must state that Ugandans were unhappy and felt a deep sense of betrayal that most of Africa kept silent while tyrants killed them...Tyranny is colour-blind and should be no less reprehensible because it is perpetrated by one of our own kind.

Yoweri Museveni, speech at OAU Summit Addis Ababa, 1986.

I have said on several occasions and I want to repeat it today...Zaire is a unitary state and will remain unitary. ...As long as I am alive, this will remain so. This is clear and distinct and cannot be questioned.

Mobutu Sese Seko, speech to MPR Central Committee, 1982.

The quotations above are significant here because in both cases time and history would prove the speakers wrong. In the case of Museveni, it is arguable that his complicity in the lead up to the Rwandan genocide and his 'intervention' in Zaire⁴³ are proof enough of his own tyranny, while in the case of Mobutu Sese Seko, it was this same 'intervention' by Uganda and others that precipitated his downfall and the subsequent collapse of Zaire. Understanding the causes and complexities of this war is a difficult task (at one time seven African countries were involved in the conflict) well beyond the scope of this thesis. But in order to appreciate the violence and destruction that occurred at Semuliki National Park a brief contextualisation is necessary.⁴⁴

After the genocide in Rwanda in 1994,⁴⁵ the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Major General Paul Kagame, organised a Tutsi dominated government that had close

⁴³ Alongside his Rwandan allies and Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL).

⁴⁴ It must be noted here that at SNP, 'Phase Two' primarily focused on continuing to build institutional capacity within relevant Ugandan Departments, and to complete and compile biodiversity assessments. Both the 1997 SNP Management Plan and the comprehensive 1996 SNP Biodiversity Assessment attest to the bona fide development in these regards and the achievements made immediately prior to the onset of violence.

⁴⁵ For a better scholastic understanding of this horrendous event and Museveni's involvement see Mamdani, 2001; for a shorter yet equally compelling explanation of the Genocide see Kapuscinski, 1998.

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historical ties to Museveni and the NRM. Both Kagame and Museveni had longstanding political grievances with Mobutu Sese Seko (Clark, 2001), but in the case of Kagame, it was Mobutu's harbouring (in Zaire) of Hutu soldiers and mercenaries (implicated in the genocide) that was most worrying (Ibid). Clark, (Ibid, p.268) describes the catalyst to Ugandan and Rwandan forces entering Zaire and the subsequent toppling of Mobutu as follows:

The spark in the powder keg... was Mobutu's decision in September 1996 to expel some 300,000 Zairians of Tutsi ethnicity (the 'Banyamulenge') from Zairian territory. Within weeks of this announcement, a full-fledged civil war between the Banyamulenge and the Hutu refugees was under way, with the Zairian national army backing the latter. Rwandan advisers, and then regular troops, were soon crossing the border to come to the aid of the Banyamulenge, and other anti-Mobutu elements...Uganda joined its ally in this effort, dispatching an unknown number of advisers from the Ugandan army. Over the course of the next six months, the AFDL, in conjunction with its Rwandan and Ugandan allies, defeated the Zairian national army in battle after battle until it finally took Kinshasa in May 1997.

Semuliki National Park, due to its geographical location behind the Ruwenzori Mountain Range and alongside the vast Ituri Forest of the DRC, proved to be a strategic staging ground for parts of the conflict described above, as well as a conduit for Ugandan forces crossing into Zaire, and later for rebel groups from the newly created DRC staging incursions into Uganda (Bellissima, Pers. Com 2005). The civilian population alongside the Park fled the area, along with most of the staff employed in SNP, to Internally Displaced People's Camps. The only staff required to stay behind were male rangers with intimate knowledge of the park, co-opted by the UPDF to guide troops through the forest looking for rebels, or 'escorting' troops to the banks of the Semuliki River where they would cross the international border (Ibid). All community conservation activities were

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suspended in the wake of the violence, and the already meagre infrastructure created at SNP was destroyed or stolen by rebels.⁴⁶

This wanton ruin at SNP (and in Bundibugyo at large) reveals a very sad irony prevalent in many conflict zones across the world. Because the area around SNP is considered very remote (even in Ugandan terms) it lacks many of the (Western) influences of areas considered more developed. There is still no electricity supply or reticulated water system in Bundibugyo District and most of the luxuries of the developed world are well beyond the means of any local residents. However in 1996 (and perhaps even at present) the most ubiquitous intrusion of the developed world into this remote corner of Uganda was the vast array of high powered weapons used by soldiers and rebels, and supplied by the arms manufacturers of the developed world.

Fortunately the violence in and around SNP abated by 2000, but the threat of rebels in the neighbouring Ituri Forest of the DRC was still present at the time of writing (May 2006) and UWA rangers at SNP were still regularly required to 'escort' UPDF soldiers crossing the Semliki River into the DRC (Anonymous UWA Ranger, Pers. Com 2005). These types of activities are often not officially sanctioned by UWA or the UPDF yet UPDF movement in Eastern DRC is still common (Ibid.) and in certain cases, the UPDF assists UWA in chasing Congolese citizens caught crossing into SNP to access resources or to

⁴⁶ SNPs simple infrastructure included a generator, computer, radio equipment, basic tourist and staff accommodation and a large safe. All of this, including the accommodation, was either stolen or destroyed. The nearly immovable safe still sits askew outside the SNP head office at Natandi *sans* door or hinges.

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steal permitted fishing dug-outs moored on the Ugandan side of the Semliki River.⁴⁷ This fact and the brief contextualisation provided above highlight just how malleable and porous international borders can be during times of conflict and during times of relative calm and stability. Previous threats to SNP arose as a result of the collapse of internal (conservation) boundaries and subsequent encroachment by farmers, but the collapse of the international border allowed for a shorter (but significantly more acute) threat to both the ecology of SNP and the residents living nearby. As was the case with the inception of 'Phase One', only a climate of political stability could allow the IUCN and UWA to address the needs of local residents of Bundibugyo and the national park. Hence, with a return to calm beginning in 2000, the IUCN and UWA were able to implement 'Phase Three' of the KSCDP.

⁴⁷. Despite repeated questioning the same Ranger would not commit to any answer regarding what happens to those unfortunate enough to get caught.

Phase Three

'Phase Three' of the KSCDP commenced at KNP in 1998 and at SNP in 2000 and came to an official close in 2002.⁴⁸ Yet again, KNP was the primary focus within this phase of the KSCDP, emphasising the painful and measured return to a 'normal' situation at SNP and surrounds. And yet again, the progress made at KNP during 'Phase Three' laid the necessary foundations for UWA to effectively manage SNP and contribute to local development following the cessation of the project. A summary of the main achievements of the KSCDP at SNP is offered below using two main themes to consolidate all the differing initiatives that comprised the KSCDP :

1. Strengthening Management Capacity and Authority

The aims of this theme were to develop UWA's management capacity at SNP through a combination of improved park management systems including; detailed and inclusive planning sessions, development and maintenance of infrastructure (computers, radios, staff field posts and housing), rebuilding of tourist facilities, and improved revenue generation (Chetri et al. 2004). However, the KSCDP End-Of-Project Evaluation report concludes that at SNP, primarily due to the 1996 conflict, "some project assumptions did not hold true." (Chege et al. 2002, p.53). Nonetheless, both the 1997 and 2005 Management Plans attest to the thorough and well considered administrative planning for SNP and the strengthened institutional capacity and authority to simultaneously conserve the rich biodiversity at SNP, respond to social and environmental threats at SNP, and to benefit local development.⁴⁹ As Chetri et al. (2004, p. 132) notes, this process of

⁴⁸ Both Phase Two and Three were funded by the Dutch Government.

⁴⁹ The 2005 Management Plan will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter.

“Institutional Strengthening” combined numerous approaches that looked beyond just institutional policy and also considered skills development for individual staff members. By providing increased ranger training and supervision the hope was to rapidly improve lower level personnel procedures (such as reporting and monitoring), however they also conclude that this failed to materialise primarily as a result of “unrealistic budget provisions [by] both donor and host.” (Ibid).

2. Reducing Community Impact on Biodiversity of SNP and Further Developing Community Beneficiation Schemes.

The overall achievement of this theme relied on numerous different strategies that included environmental awareness campaigns, income generation and diversification schemes, problem animal management, population reduction measures and Collaborative Resource Management (CRM) agreements (Ibid.) The KSCDP End-Of-Project Evaluation highlights specific achievements at SNP thus (Ibid, p.56):

Increased tree planting in schools by the Wildlife Clubs of Uganda and by individual students at their parent’s homes as a result of environmental awareness activities... improved park–community relations as a result of positive interaction gained during planning and negotiations sessions for addressing community-wildlife conflicts and CRM agreements, and increased reporting of illegal activities as a result of improved environmental awareness, and trust between communities and the park management.

While the above quote may paint a rosy picture of a job well done, it conceals the fact that the residents of Bundibugyo continue to live in poverty and that UWA continually faces challenges such as illegal resource extraction or encroachment. This is mentioned not to denigrate the achievements of the IUCN and UWA and the KSCDP, but rather to

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stress that in both themes described above the KSCDP served as the foundation upon which the management of SNP has continued to improve.

These achievements notwithstanding, a final return to archival material reveals an interesting part of the narrative history of SNP that is not made clear in the published data cited above. The first issue concerns a particular CRM initiative aimed at commercially producing palm-oil on land within SNP. Promoted by the agricultural department in nearby forest reserves in 1998, the scheme soon required land from SNP to be cleared⁵⁰ in order to facilitate viable economic production by a large number of farmers. Needless to say, this requirement was in direct opposition to the new conservation attempts taking place at SNP and threatened to reverse the work done since 1988 in keeping farmers from cultivating and settling within the forest. However, the project was deemed important enough that once again President Yoweri Museveni turned his attention to SNP. In a letter to Henry Kajura, Minister of Water, Lands and Environment, the President makes his feelings very clear (NFA, President Museveni, 2000):

The palm tree oil project in Bundibugyo district has stalled due to inadequate land area among other reasons. You are aware this is a very important project, which will boost the local and national economy when it is operational. I, therefore, direct that you allow the farmers of Bundibugyo to grow palm trees in two square kilometers of the forest. The farmers should grow only palm trees. They should not construct homesteads nor grow other crops there. The two square kilometers will not be degazetted from the forest reserve but will only be leased to the farmers for the purpose of growing palm trees only.

Despite the President's directive, the proposed clearing never took place. The reason relates not to a sudden dwindling of the President's absolute powers in Uganda, but rather to unsuitable machinery. Although the machinery in question was designed with the

⁵⁰ But not officially excised from SNP.

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express purpose of crushing palm nuts to extract oil, Roberts (Pers. Com, 2005) describes how the equipment inexplicably malfunctioned, causing the nuts to explode, covering anyone nearby in sticky palm oil. Shortly thereafter popular interest in the scheme (understandably) dwindled and the entire initiative fell by the way side.

The second item of archival material immediately precedes the data described above, and offers insight into the working relationship between Ugandan wildlife officials and their counterparts from the primary donor country, the Netherlands. Essentially a letter of resignation, the document highlights the tension between donors and recipients prevalent in many collaborative initiatives (NFA, Anonymous, 1995).⁵¹

In conclusion, it is my considered opinion that Dr. X (of the Netherlands) lacks the ability to be an effective Team Leader able to rise to the challenge of the assignment at hand. As a result, I am compelled to withdraw from the team of evaluators. As you are aware, this is not the first time I have collaborated with a team of outside consultants. It may also be worth mentioning that both Mr. Y and I have been in the consulting business for a long time. We are internationally known for good work. The effort we were prepared to put into this project was for God and our Country, not the financial rewards. Unfortunately, the demonstrated arrogance of the donor's representatives on this project is totally unacceptable to me. I do know that our country is active in soliciting donor funds for the development of Uganda. I am also aware that a certain minimum level of sensitivity is expected of the donors towards the people of the recipient country. In this case, this has not been the case.

While this letter refers to an evaluation process near the end of 'Phase Two' of the KSCDP (i.e. 1995) it is included anecdotally to highlight the fact that the KSCDP faced challenges not only from population pressure and regional violence, but also from the constraints of personality clashes and ego. While the author assumes that the incident

⁵¹ Due to the nature of this letter, names have been removed.

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With the rise of Yoweri Museveni's NRM in 1986, Uganda entered a period of relative calm, allowing the return of international conservation NGOs and foreign donors to address the shortfalls created by 25 years of violence and neglect. Semuliki was rapidly cleared of many encroachers, and serious work began to strengthen the institutional capacity of managing authorities and to address rural development through conservation by declaring Semuliki a National Park in 1993. However, as illustrated above, the regional warfare of 1996-2000 severely disrupted any gains made in the preceding years and recovery and rebuilding efforts after that conflict continue at present.

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recorded above was not the only one in a twelve year period, it is a chance occurrence that it should appear in the NFA archives (erroneous filing perhaps) and no other documents of this kind are available for public perusal. Nonetheless it offers a brief and tantalising glimpse into the invisible and unreported machinations that took place in implementing the KSCDP.

Fortunately time has allowed the benefit of experience to shine forth in many UWA staffers, from the SNP Head Warden down to Ranger Guides⁵² and Law Enforcement Rangers. Community beneficiation schemes are also beginning to show returns, and these concrete,⁵³ visible results further contribute to improved relations between UWA and the residents of Bundibugyo. Chapter Four which follows examines how the lessons learnt at SNP and KNP during the KSCDP, described above, are being applied to address the current challenges and opportunities at SNP.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the history of SNP dating from Ugandan independence in 1961 till the present day. This history demonstrates the decline of conservation following independence, the introduction of the Taungya system and subsequent attempts to remedy the damage cause by years of neglect. The author has shown how political insecurity coupled with population pressure eroded the authority of the UFD and harshly affected the forest environment.

⁵² Responsible for guiding tourists within SNP

⁵³ In some cases the results are literally concrete, in the form of school buildings etc.

Chapter Four - SNP Today: Transboundary Conservation and the new Paradigms for Conservation in Areas of Conflict.

Introduction

This chapter concludes the narrative history of SNP by describing the current situation at the park and considering possible options for the future. In this chapter, the researcher uses the latest SNP management plan (UWA, 2005b) as well as personal interviews and observations to discuss the three primary areas of concern in SNP, namely:

- Conservation practice and policy.
- Community development and poverty alleviation.
- Transboundary natural resource management initiatives.

Before discussing the above themes in detail it is worthwhile to briefly contextualise SNP within Uganda's larger conservation estate and to consider who actually implements UWA policy and directives. SNP forms part of the Kibale Conservation Area (KCA) which includes SNP, KNP and other small forest reserves in Western Uganda. At the time of research for this study, Johnson Masereka was the Head Warden of the KCA (and therefore SNP) and was based at KNP headquarters where he was responsible for all UWA activities in the KCA. He delegated responsibility to Haruna Kulu, the Warden-In-Charge at SNP, who, along with 29 other UWA staff members comprised the entire personnel complement responsible for managing the 220km² Semuliki National Park. Of those 29 mentioned above, 19 are responsible for law enforcement, six for tourist

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guiding, two for community outreach and the remaining three for secretarial and accounting duties.

In terms of its conservation status, UWA (Ibid, p.7) describes the forest thus:

SNP is the only true lowland natural high forest in Uganda and among a few in East Africa. The forest is generally classified as moist and semi-deciduous. It is located close to the site of a postulated Pleistocene forest refugium making SNP a potential site for rare species. A single hardwood tree *Cynometra alexandrii*, dominates most of the forest. This tree forms almost pure stands varying in height from 10 to 30 m in several areas.

As well as forested areas, SNP is comprised of 7% swamp forest “dominated by species such as *Metragyna stipulosa*, *Elaeis guineensis* and *Ficus vogeliana*” (Ibid). Of the 336 tree species recorded in SNP, 24 are restricted to SNP alone and a further three (*Millettia excelsa*, *Cordia millenii* and *Lovoa swynnertonii*) are considered to be endangered (Ibid). Other vegetation of commercial interest consists of the oil palm and wild coffee, while the total number of flowering plants recorded in SNP represent 7.4% of Uganda’s total number of flowering plants (Ibid.) “Seven species are Albertine Rift Endemics, 14 globally threatened, and 18 are IUCN listed” (Ibid.)

The Fauna at SNP is comparatively diverse and SNP is one of five Parks regarded as important for conserving both birds and mammals in Uganda and birds specifically in the Great Lakes region (Ibid). Of the 1007 total bird species found in Uganda, a staggering 435 species (43%) are found in SNP (Davenport and Howard, 1996).

Mammalian fauna at SNP numbers 53 species of which five are large mammals and seven are small mammals found in no other park in Uganda (Ibid). Eight species are regionally endemic (Mona monkey, forest buffalo, bay duiker, Beecroft's flying squirrel,

pygmy flying squirrel, little collared fruit bat, water chevrotain and target rat) and a further ten species occur sporadically in a highly limited number of East African locations (UWA, 2005b).

Conservation Practice and Policy

Conservation practice and policy at SNP is the cumulative result of input from numerous actors and stakeholders that include UWA, the NFA, District local governments, NGOs and communities neighbouring SNP. The 2005 SNP management Plan (Ibid. p. vii) succinctly summates how the process of policy formulation directed subsequent implement:

The process began with the identification of problems and issues relating to SNP. This was done in consultation with different stakeholders. The conservation values of the Park were then identified and the purpose for future management formulated... There are various conservation values, which are the reason Semuliki National Park must be conserved. Some of the key ones identified include being a component of the Albertine Rift and part of the Guinea – Congo biome, the only lowland semi-deciduous forest in Uganda and having a spectacular scenic beauty enhanced by the presence of hot springs at Sempaya and several endemic and endangered species... The forest ecosystem supports cultural heritage for the surrounding communities and is a source of various resources that they require for their livelihood. It contributes to cultural history, as featured in folklore and traditional healing practices of the local people. The Bamaga community use (*sic*) the hot springs at Sempaya to perform various rituals believed to be important for their continued existence. The Batwa whose culture and way of life is within the forest are dependant on the Park for a home and for subsistence...

In order to accommodate the various imperatives described above, UWA employs a zoning system to demarcate SNP into discreet spatial areas “according to their resource values and sensitivity” (Ibid. p. viii). As Figure 8 (below) illustrates, there are four zones

(Wilderness, Tourism, Administrative and Integrated Resource Use)⁵⁴ which collectively consider conservation, research, tourism, management and sustainable use of resources by neighbouring communities. In order to preclude confusion regarding zonal delineation, UWA is currently involved in a process to clearly mark SNP's boundaries. In areas where there are no physical markers such as the Fort Portal-Bundibugyo road, UWA proposes "erecting concrete pillars and planting of live markers to visually re-enforce the boundary line" (Ibid. p. ix).

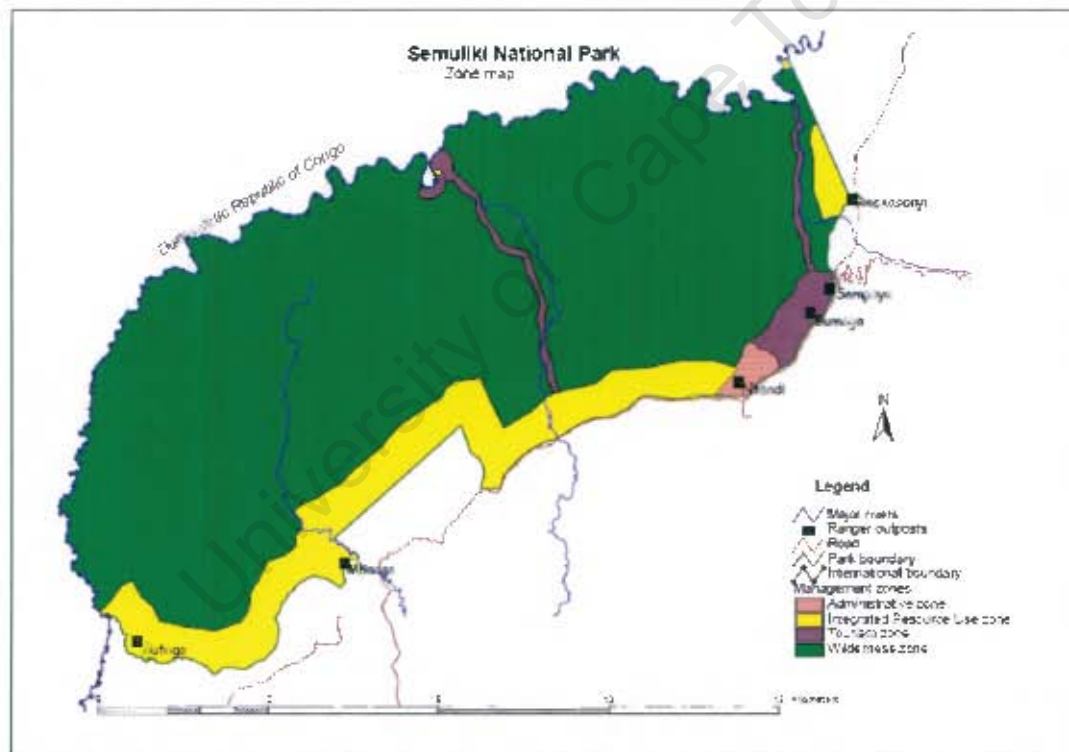


Figure 8: SNP showing use zones. Source: UWA, 2005b.

⁵⁴ Wilderness Zone: High level of protection. Activities limited to law enforcement, research and monitoring.

Administrative Zone: Park headquarters, housing and outposts.

Tourism Zone: Sempaya Hot Springs, Kiriwira trail and fishing "village"

Integrated Resource Use Zone: Kiriwira trail for medicinal plant collecting, fishing at the end of the Kiriwira trail and cattle watering at Rwakasenye, near the northern tip of SNP

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Other continuous conservation challenges that SNP faces relate mainly to issues of law enforcement. Masereka (Pers. Com. 2005) includes illegal poaching, pit sawing and trafficking of organic specimens as historical challenges that he feels will always be present at SNP. In his view, despite the attempts to educate residents and contribute to their development, the reality of abject poverty in the region will always overshadow the attempts at conservation.

Community Development and Poverty Alleviation

As the zoning plan indicates however, allowance has been made at SNP for limited resource extraction. Over and above this, numerous measures are in place to address the differing needs of the various communities neighbouring SNP. First and foremost are the Batwa community (numbering 71 individuals) who reside within the park boundaries. After continuous consultation with them, plans for their welfare⁵⁵ include the purchase of land outside the SNP for permanent settlement (Masereka, Pers. Com. 2005), the establishment of a Batwa Cultural Centre within SNP easily accessible to tourists (UWA, 2005b), the establishment of apiaries for honey production and, the opening of a Semuliki Batwa Community Development Association bank account to equitably manage community funds (Kulu, Pers. Com. 2005).

The above-mentioned endeavours are all the more commendable when considering the high levels of alcohol and marijuana abuse observed in this tiny community. The author visited their settlement several times, but meaningful interaction proved impossible in the

⁵⁵ Beyond allowances for collecting wood, medicinal plants and fruits.

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given context.⁵⁶ At each visit, numerous members of the community (from elderly ladies to children to the 'King') repeatedly produced marijuana, various smoking paraphernalia and miniature bow-and-arrow sets – apparently the usual tourist fare. Even though the author never displayed a camera, numerous community members offered to have their photograph taken for approximately US\$ 10 per picture. As a result, the author has no photographs of the Batwa community or their village, to illustrate this textual description.

It is important to stress here that despite the negative description above, the Semuliki Pygmy Community is finally receiving recognition as the original inhabitants of SNP. While this fact has clearly not allowed them unfettered access to the forest, it nonetheless represents the most respectful and significant attempts to assist this community since the arrival of colonial explorers towards the end of the 1890s and should be commended as such.

As well as the Pygmy community at SNP, UWA also recognises the needs of other communities neighbouring the park. These include resource extraction in the form of firewood, medicinal plants, fishing and harvesting of rattan cane to produce furniture. All of these activities are limited to the designated zones and are complemented by a Revenue Sharing Agreement with UWA where by community members receive 20% of all gate fees. Approximately US\$ 2500 was available for distribution in 2005 and was spent on projects chosen by the differing beneficiaries. These projects include the construction of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) primary school,

⁵⁶ Budgetary constraints did not allow for the employment of a translator.

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the re-roofing of the Butoga school, and the development of a tree planting scheme to promote sustainable fuel wood consumption (Ibid).

Finally, as a means of promoting general economic activity in Bundibugyo, UWA has completed the rebuilding and furnishing of tourist accommodation and plans to develop the Kiriya trail and fishing 'village' as an overnight camping spot for intrepid bird and primate watchers. Unlike most of UWA's national parks, there are no private concessionaires operating tourist activities or accommodation in SNP. While this is primarily the result of insufficient tourist numbers to justify the required investment, UWA management hopes tourist numbers will rise with sustained stability and security in the area (Ibid).

Transboundary Conservation

Community based natural resource management (CBNRM) characterises conservation developments of the late 1980s and 90s as shown above. In the new millennium the focus has shifted in many ways to a completely new approach, namely, Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs). Whether referred to as super parks, peace parks, TFCAs or Transboundary Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) schemes,⁵⁷ these initiatives are all pertinent to contemporary conservation in East Africa and beyond. They all involve PAs that straddle international borders, and they all hope to achieve better environmental management and increased tourism and development.

⁵⁷ de Villiers (1999) explains that for various reasons there is no conformity amongst academics over which term should be used to describe such co-operation

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TFCAs are by no means unique to Africa; indeed, there is some form of TFCA on every continent and the concept has been dated as early as the 1920's (Ramutsindela and Tsheola, 2002). The Waterton-Glacier International Park, spanning the U.S. - Canadian border (established in 1932), is cited as the first successful example of a TFCA (Warburton-Lee, 1999) while the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park (KTP), officially opened in 2000, is the first example in southern Africa. Other TFCAs in southern Africa include the The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park, the Limpopo/Shashe TFCA and the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project.

From an East African Perspective, SNP is a small link in the Albertine Rift Programme, the name given to describe the network of PAs pursuing TBNRM initiatives in the region (including Queen Elizabeth and Bwindi national parks in Uganda, *Parc National des Volcans* in Rwanda and the *Parc National des Virunga* in the DRC.) The goal of the Albertine Rift Program is to improve conservation in the region "by focusing on providing information for managers of protected areas, building capacity to better manage these areas, and encouraging collaboration across national boundaries" (Wildlife Conservation Society, 2006 p.1). There is also a focus on completing biological and socioeconomic surveys "to help better plan measures to alleviate poverty in the communities that border these important protected areas" (Ibid) as well as a remote-sensing analysis project that aims to assess the rate of forest loss in the Albertine Rift (Ibid).

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Although transboundary activities in East Africa began significantly later than in southern Africa, focusing primarily on Gorilla conservation, since 2003 other parks (such as Semuliki) have been included in regional initiatives. Unlike many transboundary efforts in Southern Africa which were characterised by top-level governmental agreements and treaties from the outset, the first TBNRM attempts in the Great Lakes region were comparatively ad-hoc and motivated by conservation NGOs⁵⁸ and parastatals.

Some early accomplishments in the 'Gorilla Parks'⁵⁹ included joint patrols, GIS based species monitoring programmes and methods for overcoming language barriers between staff from varying authorities (such as regular meetings), across differing borders (Plumptre et al. 2003). At SNP none of these activities were possible however due to the precarious security situation in eastern DRC and the resulting lack of any Congolese conservation authority with which to collaborate (Maseraka, Pers. Com. 2005, Kulu, Pers. Com. 2005). Nonetheless, all SNP employees interviewed who attended those meetings attested to their importance in forging links, sharing ideas and planning for the future.

The organising NGOs were keenly aware that governmental agreements were the necessary next-step to formalise TBNRM in the region. In 2004 wildlife authorities from Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC signed an official Memorandum of Understanding formalising TBNRM activity at an institutional level and in 2005 a Tripartite declaration

⁵⁸ Specifically, the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP) and the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

⁵⁹ Such as Bwindi Impenetrable National Park.

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signed by ministers from the respective countries formalised these initiatives at a governmental level (see appendix C).

Turner, (2004, p. 11) has certain reservations regarding TFCA's however, and provides a warning when he writes:

Participatory approaches to CBNRM were supposedly central to the emerging TFCA concept. But there is now widespread scepticism about the sincerity of conservation authorities and their new allies in TFCA promotion, the private sector, with regard to rural community interests and participation. These transboundary initiatives may further conservation aims, promote regional peace and capture ecotourism benefits for the private sector, but they appear to be exacerbating the marginalisation of remote rural communities and bypassing the community-based nature conservation approaches that have been developing ...

The irony of many TBNRM initiatives, especially those designated as 'Peace Parks', is that in most cases, an existing state of peace is required to develop the park. SNP illustrates this point perfectly; however it is to the credit of those planning TBNRM initiatives in the Great Lakes region that PAs such as SNP were included early in the preparatory stages. The recent elections (August 2006) in the DRC will prove critically important in determining the fate of TBNRM at SNP and it is the express hope of UWA and others that a political climate of stability will develop on the Uganda-DRC border, facilitating effective TBNRM across contiguous eco-systems such as that of SNP and the Ituri forest.

However, there is one final challenge regarding resource management near SNP that deserves consideration. As the Ugandan newspaper *The New Vision* reports (17 November, 2005):

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Denis Baluku, a resident of Bundibugyo, has to cross [the] River Semuliki to cultivate his land, which was part of Uganda about six months ago (*sic*). This has been caused by the alteration of Uganda's border with DR Congo after [the] River Semuliki ... changed its course. About 10 square kilometres has been left on the DR Congo side of the border when the river shifted deep into Uganda and ... Ugandans have to cross the river by boat to cultivate on what used to be their land ... According to the local community, officials in the DR Congo now charge a fee to these people cultivating across the river yet they are still on what is supposed to be Uganda's territory.

The report mentions melting of snow on Mount Ruwenzori,⁶⁰ and overgrazing along the Semliki River banks as probable causes for the river's shift. While reducing cattle numbers is easier to achieve than reducing global warming, neither offers a workable solution to address the problem. In Chapter Two the researcher recounts a dispute over the Uganda-Congo boundary that effectively started the narrative (and defined the borders) of Semuliki National Park. That narrative has come full circle, and concludes with a return to boundary disputes over the same meandering stretch of water, and a natural redefinition of the boundary agreed upon in 1909. With political instability still prevalent in the region, events such as this may exacerbate existing tension, forgoing any TBNRM activity. However, if allowed to develop effectively, TBNRM might contribute to solving this problem and others in the region. Again, this point stresses the paradox of African borders and the irony that while TBNRM can contribute to peace and stability in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, it requires an existing measure of peace and stability, currently lacking, to effectively make those contributions.

⁶⁰ Claimed in the report to be the result of global warming.

Conclusion

The future of SNP depends largely on the enabling conditions created by political stability and the subsequent capacity to couple the eradication of poverty with conservation requirements. Colonial management emphasised clearly defined borders and limited resource use as defining conservation imperatives. Those concerns fell away with the political turmoil that engulfed Uganda during the 1970s but a return to conservation in the 1980s (and subsequent declaration as a national park in the 1990s) echoed many of the same principles initiated during the colonial era⁶¹ albeit with considerations for those living in and around the park.

Those considerations include finding ways for neighbouring communities to participate in and benefit from conservation planning and praxis at SNP while simultaneously maintaining and improving the institutional elements (such as research and monitoring) that focus on protecting the unique ecology. TBNRM initiatives in the region (although limited by security concerns at SNP) indicate the new paradigm in (African) conservation. This paradigm seeks to overcome the colonial legacy of randomly defined international borders while simultaneously working to further entrench the colonial legacy of clearly defined conservation boundaries.

As a PA in the borderlands of Uganda, SNP has enjoyed the dual distinction of both obscurity and notoriety and throughout its history the issue of borders (be they international, national or social) has been contested, resolved and contested again. As nature shifts those borders to her liking, the challenge remains to look beyond the borders

⁶¹ Such as clearly defined boundaries and limited resource use.

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while concurrently conserving the ecology of SNP and addressing the pressing needs of the poverty-stricken residents of Bundibugyo District.

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A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation

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NFA 1953e. Provincial Forest Officer Leggat, Western Province to Chief Conservator of Forests (Name Unknown), Entebbe

NFA 1953f. Governor Cohen to the People of Bwamba County delivered at Bundibgyo, 23 August, 1953.

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation

NFA 1955a. Provincial Forest Officer Leggat, Western Province to The Manager, Kagera Saw Mills.

NFA 1955b. Provincial Forest Officer Leggat, Western Province to Chief Conservator of Forests (Name Unknown), Entebbe.

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Memorandum on Semiliki Forest

NFA 1960b. Chief Conservator of Forests (Name Unknown), Entebbe to Uganda Wildlife Commission.

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NFA 1969a. Sgt. Tamukkede (Private Capacity) to Regional Forestry Officer Midholi, Western Region.

NFA 1969b. Regional Forestry Officer Midholi, Western Region to Chief Conservator of Forests (Name Unknown), Entebbe.

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation

NFA 1969c. District Forest Officer Murekezi, Toro to Forest Guard Semuyogya, Semuliki.

NFA 1969d. Regional Forestry Officer Midholi, Western Region to District Forest Officer Murekezi, Toro

NFA 1969e. District Forest Officer Murekezi, Toro to Regional Forestry Officer Midholi, Western Region.

NFA 1971. Regional Forestry Officer Midholi, Western Region to District Forest Officer Murekezi, Toro.

NFA 1972. Muguruka, U. (Community Leader) to The President of Uganda, Kampala.

NFA 1978. Karusale, E. (Community Chairman) to District Forest Officer (Name Unknown), Fort Portal.

NFA 1980. Chief Forest Officer Munyakabere, Entebbe to District Forest Officer (Name Unknown), Fort Portal.

NFA 1982. District Forest Officer Nuwe-Wenke, Bundibugyo to Chief Forest Officer Munyakabere, Entebbe.

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation

NFA 1984. Chief Forest Officer Munyakabere, Entebbe to District Forest Officer Nuwe-Wenke, Bundibugyo.

NFA 1987. Kawamara, A (Community Leader) to, Yoweri Museveni, Kampala.

NFA 1988a. District Forest Officer Butoono, Bundibugyo to Chief Forest Officer (Name Unknown), Entebbe.

NFA 1988b. District Forest Officer Butoono, Bundibugyo to Chief Forest Officer (Name Unknown), Entebbe.

NFA 1995. Anonymous, Kampala to Director of Environment Ministry, Kampala.

NFA 2000. President Of Uganda Yoweri Museveni, Kampala to Henry Kajura, Minister of Water, Lands and Environment, Kampala.

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A. Stelman - Contested Conservation

Fort Portal Archive

FP 1973. Bemuweeaba, W.S. (Department of Agriculture Cocoa Development Scheme, Bwamba) to District Forest Officer Murekezi, Toro.

FP 1979. District Forest Officer (Name Unknown) to Sub-County Chief (Name Unknown), Bubukwanga

A. Stelman - Contested Conservation

Personal Communication – Conducted in Uganda between November 2005-January 2006

Bellisima, Godfrey. - UWA Ranger, SNP.

Byaruhanga, Robert. - UWA Head Ranger, SNP.

Farmer, Bill. - UWA Technical Advisor.

Kamagusha, Ben. - Lawyer/Institutional Specialist/Environmental

Kulu, Haruna. - 'Warden-In-Charge' Semuliki National Park

MacMillan, Scott - Wildlife Management Consultant

Maseraka, Johnson. - UWA Head Warden, KCA.

Matovu, Nicholas. - UWA Ranger, SNP.

Muhweezi, Alex. - IUCN Uganda.

Roberts, Andrew. - Environmental Consultant/Landscaper/Author.

Appendix A. Sample Interview Questions

Taken from interview with Mr. A. Muhweezi, IUCN Uganda.

- 1.) How did the IUCN get involved in Semuliki Forest?
- 2.) What were the criteria/conditions for the IUCN to become involved?
- 3.) Were there institutional wrangles within the different government departments involved in the KSCDP? What issues did they revolve around?
- 4.) How were these mediated and settled?
- 5.) Did the IUCN exacerbate existing tensions or create new ones?
- 6.) After gaining National Park status, what were the most pressing concerns at SNP?
- 7.) Was capacity building a priority? If so, how?
- 8.) Kibale seems (on paper, at least) the more successful partner in the KSCDP. Do you agree? Why?

Appendix B. Permit for Taungya Farming

PERMIT FOR TAUNGYA (KUMRI) FARMING

Permit is granted to of
Village: Gembhera of Bhamo County of Taro
District, to cultivate a taungya farm of Hectare(s)
in the Gembhera Forest Reserve for the period of years(s),
subject to the following conditions:-

The area for farming shall be demarcated by a Forest Officer.
All clearing and burning shall be done thoroughly by the
farmer to the satisfaction of Forest Officer and shall be
completed by the middle of March or August. Clearing shall
include felling all palm trees.

The Permit holder and his family shall at all times assist
forest officers in the prevention and extinction of fires
and the prevention and detection of forest offences in the
reserve.

Valuable trees such as Manyatzi, Kuyale, Myati must not
be cut or burnt.

Sufficient straight pegs of not less than 1 meter ^{shall} be
cut by the farmer from non-valuable species from the plot
or its surrounding and shall be available on the plot by
the middle of March.

No planting or sowing of food crops shall be permitted until
pegging has been completed.

No permanent food crops such as Cassava or corn crops
such as Coffee shall be permitted.

Plantains shall be planted 3 metres from the tree.
Rice shall also be planted about 1 metre from the tree.
Any food crops interfering with a planted tree shall be
liable to be removed by a forest officer.

The farmer shall be permitted to cultivate his plot for
5 years during which time he shall keep the planted trees
free from weeds and climbers. Harvesting of crops ripening
after the expiry of this permit shall be permitted but
no further cultivation.

Failure to observe any of these conditions may result
in the cancellation of this permit and the forfeiture
of the food crops to the Government.

Additional Conditions

No house shall be built in the Reserve.
The farmer shall not claim ownership of the plot allocated
to him; the Forest Reserve is the property of the Government.

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(d) Retention of species of trees

Saplings, poles and medium sized valuable trees of *Chlorophora excelsa*, *Mildoruediodendron excelsus* will be retained and farmers should be instructed clearly not to cut them during clearing.

(e) Clearing and burning

Clearing and burning will be done by the farmers and must be done properly. All palm trees should be felled. The whole operation should be completed by end of March or August.

(f) Pegging

Pegging will be done by the Forest Guard incharge of the Forest, pegs being supplied by farmers and will be completed by March or August. Spacing will be at 5 x 5 metres.

(f*) Planting Food Crops

Planting or sowing of food crops must be done after pegging is completed. No permanent crops will be permitted. Food crops permitted are: - Finger millet, Groundnuts, beans a certain variety of matoke as decided by Forest Guard and in some cases rice. In cases of rice and matoke trees must be kept about 1 metre from rice plants and 2 metres from matoke plants.

(g) Species to plant

See para 3 (i)

(h) Planting Tree crop

Tree crop will not be planted until the soil moisture content is adequate. Care must be taken to ensure that planting pits are deep enough to take roots and that the soil is pressed firmly round the roots during planting. Planting should be completed by end of April or middle of October.

(i) Heating up

A count of healthy plants will be made in June, 80 end of November and heating up done in September or April of the following year.

(j) Period of cultivation and clearing

Farmers will be permitted to cultivate the area for 3 years or until tree growth renders it impossible to grow food crops underneath. During this period, farmers will be responsible for keeping the tree crop free from weeds and climbers.

(k) Tending after cultivation

The Department will be responsible for all tending operations after the farmers have moved out for other new areas.

(l) Tenancy Record Book

This book will be kept by the Forest Guard. A copy of this book will also be kept by the DFO. DFO, in consultation with A.S.O. and Senior Conservator Forestry, will prescribe tending operations to be carried out in the planted crop. No Departmental labour will be used until farmers have moved out of the planted areas.

REVENUE, FOREST, MINES, WATER.

12. S.O.P. Entable.

Appendix C. International Transboundary Conservation Agreements

**TRILATERAL
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
the Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs
Nationaux
the Uganda Wildlife Authority
and
the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la
Nature
ON THE COLLABORATIVE
CONSERVATION
OF THE
CENTRAL ALBERTINE RIFT
TRANSFRONTIER PROTECTED AREA NETWORK**

PREAMBLE

The Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux (hereinafter referred to as "ORTPN"), the Uganda Wildlife Authority (hereinafter referred to as "UWA") and the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (hereinafter referred to as "ICCN"), (hereinafter jointly referred to as "the Parties"),

RECOGNISING the principle of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of their states;

CONSCIOUS of the benefits to be derived from close co-operation;

ACKNOWLEDGING the necessity to conserve the environment and in particular the unique ecosystem of the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network for the benefit of Rwanda, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the international community; and

DESIRING to extend, maintain and protect the unique ecosystem of the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network through the collaborative management of the Volcano National Park, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Semliki National Park, Ruwenzori Mountains National Park, Kibale National Park and Virunga National Parks

HEREBY AGREE as follows:

ARTICLE 1

RECOGNITION OF THE TRANSBOUNDARY NATURE OF THE CENTRAL ALBERTINE RIFT PROTECTED AREA NETWORK, COMPOSED OF THE VIRUNGA NATIONAL PARK, VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK, BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL PARK, MGAHINGA GORILLA NATIONAL PARK, QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK, SEMLIKI NATIONAL PARK, KIBALE NATIONAL PARK AND RUWENZORI MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

The Parties hereby jointly recognise the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network as a transboundary ecosystem shared by eight National Parks composed of the Volcano National Park in the Republic of Rwanda, the Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Kibale National Park, Semliki National Park and Ruwenzori Mountains National Park in the Republic of Uganda, and the Virunga National Park in the DRC. The parties further appreciate that there have been efforts to coordinate and collaboratively manage these protected areas as one ecosystem.

The parties hereby agree to recognize these efforts and further pledge to continue to implement, and formalize the transboundary collaboration in the areas of conservation,

research, monitoring, community-based conservation and eco-tourism to ensure sustainable biodiversity conservation.

The parties hereby agree to develop a Transfrontier Strategic Plan for the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier Protected Area Network (hereinafter referred to as the "Transfrontier Strategic Plan") to formalize transboundary collaboration.

ARTICLE 2

CO-OPERATION

(1) The Parties undertake, respectively, to ensure that the Volcano National Park, the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Semliki National Park, Ruwenzori Mountains National Park, Kibale National Park and the Virunga National Park (hereinafter jointly referred to as "the Parks" and separately as "the Park") take into consideration the Transfrontier objectives included in this Memorandum of Understanding between the Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, and the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature.

(2) The Parties undertake:

- . To ensure the co-ordination of the management and the development of the Parks;
- . To consult, assist and support each other in the implementation of the Transfrontier Objectives;

(3) The Parties undertake to enter into further agreements which may be required to give effect to the spirit and intent of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 3

TRANSFRONTIER OBJECTIVES

(1) The objectives of Transboundary collaboration in the Central Albertine Rift are:

- . Cooperative conservation of biodiversity and other natural and cultural values across boundaries;
- . Promote landscape-level ecosystems through protected area planning and management;
- . Advocate for integrated bioregional land-use planning and management to reduce threats to protected areas;
- . Establishment of a common vision for transboundary collaboration;
- . Building trust, understanding and cooperation among wildlife authorities, nongovernmental organisations, communities, users and other stakeholders to achieve sustainable conservation and thereby contribute to peace;
- . Sharing of regional resources, management skills, experience and good practice to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in managing biodiversity and cultural resources;

Enhancing the conservation benefits and promote at a regional level awareness and sharing of these benefits and conservation values among stakeholders ;

- a. Strengthen cooperation in research, monitoring and information management programmes;
- b. Ensure that conservation of biodiversity in the region contributes to the reduction of poverty.

ARTICLE 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSFRONTIER COLLABORATION AND THE FORMULATION OF THE TRANSFRONTIER STRATEGIC PLAN

(1) The parties agree to work together to put in place a long-term Transfrontier Strategic Plan to achieve the above-mentioned objectives. The parties shall provide for the Core Secretariat for Transfrontier collaboration and the development of a Transfrontier Strategic Plan in the Central Albertine Rift (hereinafter referred to as the "Transfrontier Core Secretariat").

(2) To develop the Transfrontier Strategic Plan and to coordinate Transfrontier collaboration, the parties will work with the designated facilitator for the transboundary process, the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP).

(3) The Transfrontier Core Secretariat will consist of the Executive Directors of the ORTPN, UWA and ICCN, as well as one Technical Associate delegated by the Executive Directors for each of the parties, and the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP).

ARTICLE 5

CENTRAL ALBERTINE RIFT TRANSFRONTIER PROTECTED AREA NETWORK CORE SECRETARIAT

(1) The Transfrontier Core Secretariat is hereby established, which shall in a manner provided for by this Agreement develop the Transfrontier Strategic Plan and coordinate Transfrontier collaborative activities within the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network. The Transfrontier Core Secretariat will provide the representatives of the ORTPN, UWA and ICCN with the opportunity to share ideas, develop proposals, provide general guidance with respect to activities undertaken in the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network and take steps that are in accordance with this Agreement to facilitate the integration and collaborative management of the Parks.

(2) The Parties hereby respectively nominate the following persons as members of the Transfrontier Core Secretariat:

On behalf of ORTPN:

- _____, Director of the Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux;
- _____, Technical Associate for the Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux;

On behalf of UWA:

- _____, Executive Director of the Uganda Wildlife Authority;
- _____, Technical Associate for the Uganda Wildlife Authority;

On behalf of ICCN:

- _____, Administrateur Délégué Générale of the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature, Kinshasa;
- _____, Technical Associate for the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature ;

On behalf of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme:

- _____, Director of the International Gorilla Conservation Programme

(3) Decisions of the Transfrontier Core Secretariat shall be taken by consensus. The Transfrontier Core Secretariat shall, subject to this Agreement, determine its own meeting times, rules and procedure, and venue for meetings provided that it shall meet at least once per annum.

ARTICLE 6

FINANCIAL MATTERS

(1) In order to discharge their obligations under this Agreement, the Parties shall endeavour to make sufficient funds available to cover any expenses that may arise from the implementation of this Agreement, provided that the Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux, the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature and the Transfrontier Core Secretariat shall use their best endeavours to obtain financial and other means of support from their own sources as well as from other sources for the formulation of the Transfrontier Strategic Plan and continued Transfrontier collaboration.

ARTICLE 7

RESPECT FOR DOMESTIC LAW

This Agreement shall in no way be construed as derogating from any provision of the domestic law in force in the countries of the Parties or any other agreement entered into between the Parties.

ARTICLE 8

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

(1) Any dispute between the Parties arising out of the interpretation or implementation of this Agreement shall be settled amicably through consultation or negotiation between the Parties.

ARTICLE 9

COMPETENT AUTHORITY

The competent authorities responsible for the implementation of this Agreement shall be

- (a) the representative for the Office Rwandais de Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux (ORTPN);
- (b) the representative for the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA); and
- (c) the representative for the Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature (ICCN) in Kinshasa.

ARTICLE 10

ENTRY INTO FORCE

This Agreement shall enter into force on the date on which this Agreement is signed by the parties.

ARTICLE 11

TERMINATION

The Agreement may be terminated by any one or more of the Parties giving three month's written notice in advance of its intension to terminate this Agreement to the Transfrontier Core Secretariat.

ARTICLE 12

AMENDMENT

This agreement may be amended through a written agreement between the parties hereto.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned have signed and sealed this Agreement in duplicate in the English and French language, both being equally authentic.

Signed in _____ on this _____ day of _____ Two Thousand and Four.

(Director of the Office Rwandais du
Tourisme et des Parcs Nationaux)
FOR THE OFFICE RWANDAIS DU TOURISME ET DES PARCS NATIONAUX

Signed in _____ on this _____ day of _____ Two Thousand and Four.

(Executive Director of the Uganda
Wildlife Authority)
FOR THE UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY

Signed in _____ on this _____ day of _____ Two Thousand and Four.

(Administrateur Délégué Générale de l'Institut
Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature)
FOR THE INSTITUT CONGOLAIS POUR LA CONSERVATION DE LA NATURE

Tripartite Declaration

On the Transboundary Natural Resources Management of the Transfrontier Protected Area Network of the Central Albertine Rift

The Democratic Republic of Congo

The Republic of Rwanda

The Republic of Uganda

RECOGNISING the necessity to conserve the unique ecosystem of the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network through the collaborative management of the Volcano National Park, Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Queen Elizabeth National Park, Semuliki National Park, Ruwenzori Mountains National Park, Kibale National Park and Virunga National Parks for the benefit of the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, and the international community;

ENVISIONING the Central Albertine Rift transfrontier protected area network together with the surrounding landscape conserving endemic and high biodiversity values sustainably;

TARGETING the establishment of a strategic transboundary collaborative management system that enables sustainable conservation of the Central Albertine Rift biodiversity for long-term socio-economic development;

CONSCIOUS of the benefits to be derived from close co-operation;

MINDFUL of the principle of sovereign equality and territorial integrity of the three states; and thus

ACCEPTING that this Agreement shall in no way be construed as derogating from any provision of the domestic law in force in the countries of the Parties or any other agreement entered into between the Parties; and

Now therefore it is hereby declared that:

1. The Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier protected area network is recognized as a transboundary ecosystem shared by the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo hereby referred to as "DRC".
2. The efforts to coordinate and collaboratively manage these protected areas as one ecosystem, and especially the development of a Transboundary Strategic Plan are hereby appreciated and noted respecting the borders of the three countries.
3. The final Transboundary Strategic Plan for the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier Protected Area Network shall be fully recognized and accepted by the three countries.
4. Efforts shall be made to initiate the development of a collaborative protocol amongst the three governments to ensure formal agreement of management of

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation

the transboundary protected area network that contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and subsequently to the common goal of poverty reduction in the three countries.

5. Recognizing the need to finance this initiative, the ministers do hereby accept to lobby their respective governments and other key players to make a financial commitment to enable implementation of the transboundary strategic plan as mentioned in article 2 above.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned have agreed on this declaration in duplicate in the English and French language, both being equally authentic.

Anselme ENERUNGA [Signature] 14/10/05
Name Signature Date

Excellence Minister ANSELME ENERUNGA,

Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Water and Forests, DRC

MITALI PROTAIS [Signature] 14/10/05
Name Signature Date

Excellence Minister of State PROTAIS MITALI,

Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Investments Promotion, Tourism and Cooperative, the Republic of Rwanda

AKAKI AYUMU JOVINO [Signature] 14/10/05
Name Signature Date

The Honourable Minister of State JOVINO AKAKI AYUMU,

Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, the Republic of Uganda

Appendix D – Photographs.

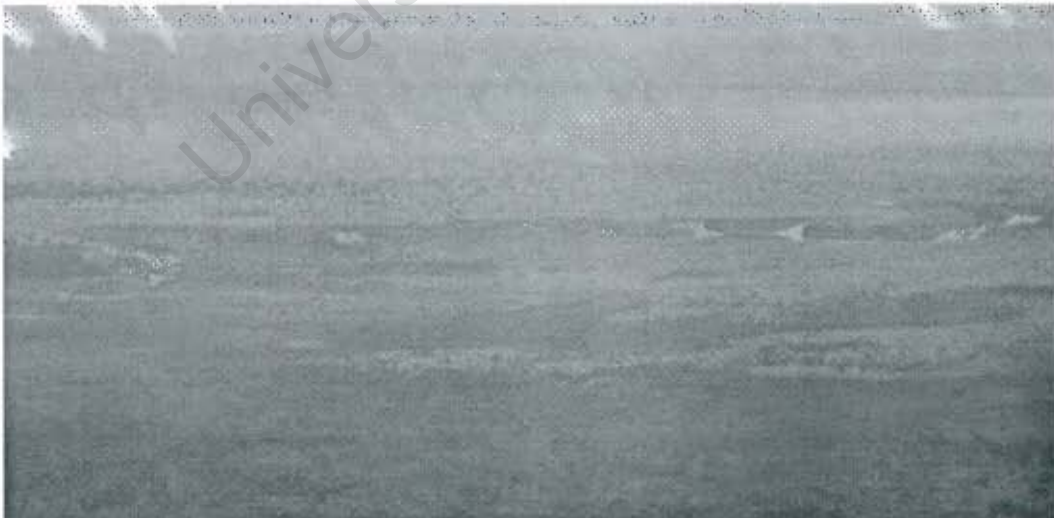
Author's Photographs: Taken between November 2005 and January 2006.



Access to SNP is via the gravel Fort Portal-Bwamba Road (visible on the left of the frame) which traverses the northern end of the Ruwenzori Mountain Range.



The meandering Semliki River divides Uganda from the Democratic Republic of Congo and forms the western boundary of SNP.





A trail cuts through the dense forest in the Tourist Use Zone of SNP, near Sempaya.



The Fort Portal – Bwamba road marks the eastern boundary of SNP. Unlike many PAs in southern Africa, SNP has no fencing to prevent people and game entering or exiting the park. Many Bundibugyo residents live and farm directly opposite SNP in settlements along the road.





Ranger Guide Nicholas Matovu in front of the Sempaya hot springs. The water is hot enough to quickly cook eggs, an activity enjoyed by many tourists who visit SNP.





In 1996 all infrastructure at SNP was destroyed by armed rebels. Only the foundations of the original tourist accommodation remain.



The raised picnic area at Bumaga campsite provides relief from the intense tropical heat and a picturesque view of the newly built tourist accommodation.





Ranger guide Godfrey Bellissima on the K. rimia trail. The trail cuts across SNP ending at a small fishing camp on the Semliki River. Much of the trail is frequently submerged or very muddy. The experience and proficiency of Ranger Guides such as Godfrey ensures that tourists experience the wide range of fauna and flora in SNP without getting lost or trapped in the mud.

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation



Despite rebel groups still operating on the lush western banks of the Semliki River (i.e. the DRC) local residents of Bundibugyo continue to catch fish from the river.



Tripartite Declaration

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The Republic of Rwanda

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A. Stancinman - Contested Conservation

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Anselme ENERUNGA 14/10/05
Name Signature Date

Excellence Minister ANSELME ENERUNGA,
Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation, Water and Forests, DRC

MITARI Protas 14th/oct/05
Name Signature Date

Excellence Minister of State PROTAIS MITARI,
Ministry of Commerce, Industries, Investments Promotion, Tourism and
Cooperative, the Republic of Rwanda

AKAKI Ayumu JOVINO 14/10/05
Name Signature Date

The Honourable Minister of State JOVINO AKAKI AYUMU,
Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry, the Republic of Uganda

Appendix D – Photographs.

Author's Photographs: Taken between November 2005 and January 2006.



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Ranger Guide Nicholas Matovu in front of the Sempaya hot springs. The water is hot enough to quickly cook eggs, an activity enjoyed by many tourists who visit SNP.





In 1996 all infrastructure at SNP was destroyed by armed rebels. Only the foundations of the original tourist accommodation remain.

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation



The raised picnic area at Bumaga campsite provides relief from the intense tropical heat and a picturesque view of the newly built tourist accommodation.





Ranger guide Godfrey Bellissima on the Kirimia trail. The trail cuts across SNP ending at a small fishing camp on the Semliki River. Much of the trail is frequently submerged or very muddy. The experience and proficiency of Ranger Guides such as Godfrey ensures that tourists experience the wide range of fauna and flora in SNP without getting lost or trapped in the mud.

A. Stamelman - Contested Conservation



Despite rebel groups still operating on the lush western banks of the Semliki River (i.e. the DRC) local residents of Bundibugyo continue to catch fish from the river.

